

19 APR 1970 STATINTL

Reds in Laos Demand Halt to Bombing by U.S.

BY SAMUEL JAMESON
[Chief of Tokyo Bureau]
[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

VIENTIANE, Laos, April 17—A major aim of communist North Viet Nam and the Pathet Lao in their proposals to Premier Souvanna Phouma for peace talks in Laos is believed to be to try to force him to oppose American bombing of the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Souvanna told this reporter in an interview that his government had not specially authorized the bombing raids in the first place and had no control over them now.

Care Little for N. Viets

He made it clear, however, that he cares little for what happens to the North Vietnamese, who refused to live up to the 1962 Geneva accord and leave Laos.

"We have no objections to the bombing of the trail," Souvanna said.

Americans here say the United States would be embarrassed severely at the least to continue bombing the Ho Chi Minh trail over the protests of Souvanna. However, they see no signs of the Laotian prince yielding to Hanoi on this point.

The fact that Souvanna's government and Laos itself survive on American military and economic aid will remain a large factor in any talks which may be held with the Pathet Lao.

Asks for Flights

In May, 1964, Souvanna first asked the United States to make reconnaissance flights over north Laos in the Plain of Jars area. As more and more North Vietnamese poured into Laos, Souvanna said, he asked for more American air support.

Eventually, full scale bombing raids in support of Laotian ground troops developed. When the weather is clear, more than 400 sorties have been flown on some days.

Souvanna told this reporter he already had offered to stop the bombing in north Laos if the North Vietnamese pulled their troops back to the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Pathet Lao Weak

However, a North Vietnamese pullout from north Laos would leave only the Pathet Lao to battle Laotian government forces and Vang Pao's Meos. Like the Viet Cong in South Viet Nam, the Pathet Lao have lost much of their former strength and effectiveness. Today they are rated as pushovers in a straight contest with Vang Pao's men.

That is why western military observers believe Hanoi committed its own troops to the current offensive.

When the North Vietnamese began their offensive in January, they mobilized two full divisions of 10,000 men each—the 312th and the 316th. Vang Pao's troops, whose specialty has always been surprise guerrilla-like attacks, offered only token resistance and moved west off the Plain of Jars. They had seized the plain with substantial American air support only last August.

Troops in Disarray

By the time Vang Pao and his force of an estimated 8,000 men got back to their strongholds at Sam Thong and Long Cheng in late February, the Meo troops were in disarray.

No one had expected the North Vietnamese to push beyond the Plain of Jars, where they had lost 8,000 tons of weapons and equipment in Vang Pao's thrust last summer. For the first time since 1962, however, they moved south of the plain.

Sam Thong was evacuated without a fight on March 18 and Vang Pao dug in at Long Cheng.

Have Logistics Woes

In the next few days, however, the North Vietnamese made no attempt to occupy Sam Thong and failed to mass enough troops to overwhelm Long Cheng. It soon became increasingly apparent that the Hanoi forces were having logistics problems.

Intelligence sources reported that only 1,000 men had been left behind on the Plain of Jars and that only

2,000 men of the 316th were committed to the probes at Long Cheng.

The sweep across the Plain of Jars cost the North Vietnamese few casualties because cloudy skies hampered American bombing missions. But the mass evacuation of tribesmen from the area did deprive them of a source of forced labor which might have been used to bear supplies and ammunition.

Committed to Supplies

At least 8,000 men of the 316th division in forward positions near Long Cheng are believed to be totally committed to moving up supplies at this time.

Had the whole division struck at Long Cheng, the North Vietnamese could have taken the outpost, American military sources said.

Meanwhile, Vang Pao's men moved back into Sam Thong on March 31. Reinforcements were flown into Long Cheng by Air America, the CIA's southeast Asia air line. Supplies continue to come, and as each day passes Vang Pao will get stronger.

Thai Reinforcements

Among the reported reinforcements was a battery of Thai artillery men, whose numbers have been estimated at between 320 and 750.

The Thai, Laotian, and American governments have denied this report, but all three governments have acknowledged that Thai nationals had come to fight—as individuals.

Thais and Laotians are related closely by race, culture, and family. As Souvanna told a press conference April 7, there

are more Laotians in Thailand than in Laos itself.

If Vang Pao can hold on at Long Cheng for five more weeks until the rainy season begins, the military picture will brighten considerably, observers here said.

Rains Stop Fighting

The rainy season forces all fighting to stop. When the skies clear up, Vang Pao's forces are expected to hold the upper hand because of the air support they get from the United States.

Last year, one military observer said, the United States "bombed the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao off the Plain of Jars" and Vang Pao swept in behind the air support. The same thing is likely to occur again this summer. If Long Cheng holds out, this military expert said.

HUNTSVILLE, ALA.
TIMES APR 19 1970

E - 53,936
S - 51,808

A Part of the Story

SIX HUNDRED PAGES of secret testimony on U.S. involvement in Laos will be released tomorrow by Sen. Stuart Symington,

ton, D-Mo. The senator says that it is with regret he has agreed to the release with about 10 per cent of the factual information still withheld.

☆ ☆ ☆

The release of the testimony accumulated by Symington's Senate subcommittee on U.S. security commitments comes after a six-month battle with the White House and the State Department. The senator declares that the battle was to obtain release of enough of the hearings to make them meaningful.

Sen. Symington insists, and we agree, that it is one thing to keep

silent about a covert operation, but another to keep from the American people a war that has cost billions of dollars—and, what is more important, American lives.

U.S. participation in the war in Laos has been kept secret long past the time when it should have been a matter of public record. We hope Sen. Symington continues to battle for further revelation.

☆ ☆ ☆

A staff aide to the senator informs us there are several major areas which remain secret:

There will be no details released concerning the irregular Lao

forces supported by Central Intelligence Agency funds. There will be no information about increased combat air sorties over northern Laos. There will be no information about U.S.-operated air bases in Thailand from which the U.S. flies missions over Laos. There will be nothing said about U.S. financing of third-country nationals in the war in North Laos.

☆ ☆ ☆

And why is the administration fighting release? Because, as it is quite aware, such information would show the U.S. had violated the 1962 Geneva Accords which guaranteed the neutrality of Laos.

STATINTL

THE NEW YORKER
18 April 1970

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

IN 1968, America had a kind of national debate on the Vietnam war, and it appeared that, as far as the *debate* was concerned, the dissenting forces won a victory of sorts. All of the political candidates for national office incorporated a good deal of the rhetoric of the peace movement in their public remarks, and all of them seemed persuaded that withdrawal of our troops was the only course the next President could afford to follow. The war was shorn of its justifications not only in the minds of its veteran critics but also, somewhat surprisingly, in the minds of its former supporters. The demand for military victory in Vietnam all but disappeared from national politics, and the considerably slackened debate centered almost exclusively on the question of how long it should take us to get out. Hawkish sentiment appeared to undergo an odd twist, in which anger at critics of the war intensified but support for the war actually declined. (A rally held in Washington last week in support of military victory in Vietnam drew, according to police estimates, only fifteen thousand people.) And yet now, nearly two years after the beginning of the 1968 campaign, in a peculiar atmosphere of mental exhaustion, in which both opponents and supporters of the war seem to have lost their forensic stamina, our involvement in the conflict continues on almost the same scale, and even threatens to expand into Laos and Cambodia. It is as though the public had shrugged its shoulders and decided to accept the war as something that

cannot be affected by human effort. The war has outlived the *issue* of the war.

In the days when the debate was still vigorous, opponents of the war used to find it helpful to expose false claims made by the government, and to point out ironies and contradictions in government policy. They used to say things like "The body count is exaggerated, and anyway a body count is no real measure of success," or "The pacification program isn't going as well as the government says it is," or "The South Vietnamese elections are rigged, and the Saigon regime is a dictatorship and doesn't have the support of its own people." And finally they pieced together the ultimate irony—that we seemed actually to be physically destroying the country we were supposed to be saving. In the last year or so, however, opponents of the war have found that it is inadequate to repeat these arguments. Perhaps one reason is that the gap between the official explanations and the realities we are faced with daily on television and in the newspapers has become so staggeringly huge and so obvious that when one persists in making these points one feels almost ludicrously simpleminded. Also, pointing out discrepancies between the official versions and the realities seems to presume a rationality in the whole enterprise that is now revealed to be entirely lacking. It is as though we were taken on a tour of an alleged health resort that turned out in fact to be a concentration camp, and were then obliged to write a report describing in great detail the specific differences between the facilities of a

health resort and those of a concentration camp. We might well feel slightly mad as we wrote things such as "Whereas in a health resort there are doctors giving people medicine, here, on

the contrary, we find armed guards systematically murdering the inmates." We might have the same sense of absurdity as we wrote that "whereas the American forces are supposed to be building democratic political structures in the villages of Vietnam, we find that they are bombing the villages and shooting the villagers." The disparity between the official policy and the reality is now so great that it appears as though policy is developing in accordance with a set of rules that will be responsive to the political situation in America but that the actual conduct of the war is developing according to a completely separate set of rules, determined by the conditions of unspeakable brutality and confusion in Vietnam itself. (Our soldiers in Vietnam have started referring to the United States and other places outside Vietnam as "the world"—as though Vietnam were on another planet.) The war, which now grinds on without evoking either much support or much new criticism, or much national debate of any kind, seems to have acquired an insane life of its own, and to have developed in utterly unexpected ways that neither its critics nor its supporters ever anticipated. Several recent news stories have brought this feeling home to us with particular force. A number of them have been so strange as to almost defy rational comment, and we have been trying to imagine what this Administration would say about them

if we were still in the period when the government felt obligated to justify and rationalize the consequences of its policies in Vietnam. What comment might the Administration make, for example, about recent reports that the Saigon police beat up disabled veterans of their own Army when they attempted to demonstrate for a rise in their disability allowance (which can be as low as two dollars a month)? What might government officials say about the recent United States Army report that at least thirty-five per cent of the combat soldiers in one brigade are regular users of marijuana? What justifications could be offered for sending a half-stoned army into the villages of Vietnam to wield the greatest volume of firepower that any army has ever possessed? (Around the same time, there has been the peculiar discovery, which we mentioned recently in these pages, that the general we support in Laos may be fighting in order to gain control of a multimillion-dollar opium trade in the contested regions.) And what arguments could be advanced in defense of the First Infantry's decision—at what turned out to be the cost of three American casualties—to carve a mile-and-a-half-long boulevard in the Vietnamese jungle in the shape of its divisional insignia? Situations such as these show that the Army, like the nation itself, now has no idea at all of what it is supposed to be doing in Vietnam. They reveal that the war has lost even the pretense of a purpose, and has become nothing more than a bloody playground for our idealism and our cruelty.

18 APR 1970

U.S. Is Considering Arms Aid to Cambodia

By Murrey Marder
Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States is considering giving limited arms aid to Cambodia for "self-defense" to checkmate any threat by Vietnamese Communist forces to overrun the capital of Phnom Penh, it was learned yesterday.

Administration strategists reportedly rule out any massive U.S. military aid program to Cambodia intended to drive out the 40,000 to 60,000 North Vietnamese and Communist invaders in that nation. Such an effort is regarded as far beyond the capacity of the 35,000-man Cambodian army without huge foreign help.

Normally any U.S. military aid program is accompanied by American military advisers. But there is reported to be great opposition inside the Nixon administration to sending such an advisory team to Cambodia, even if the decision is made to send some arms and war material.

No actual decision has been reached to respond affirmatively to Cambodia's military aid request which the United States said on Thursday is being "examined," informed sources emphasized.

On Capitol Hill, however, new warnings were sounded yesterday against any American involvement in Cambodia.

The international diplomatic circuit is now whirling with shrouded moves and speculation about Cambodia and the deeply intertwined wars in Vietnam and Laos. This atmosphere of unpredictability was intensified Thursday by the unexpected Soviet expression of interest in a new Indochina-wide conference, which

France suggested on April 1, with calculated ambiguity.

Yesterday, the United States expressed interest in exploring the Soviet move.

The United States is unlikely to make any precipitate move under these circumstances, U.S. sources indicate. But what the United States evidently wants to convey is that it is not slamming the door on Cambodia's aid request this week. To do so could encourage the formidable force of Vietnamese Communist troops in that country to force the month-old government of Premier Lon Nol to guarantee them "sanctuary" from the war in South Vietnam. This is what the United States obviously wants to checkmate.

U.S. analysts privately have expressed considerable doubt that the Vietnamese Communists in Cambodia have any intention to "conquer" that nation, as Lon Nol has warned. Instead, American specialists generally believe it is the Communist objective not to overrun Phnom Penh, but to safeguard the occupied regions along the Cambodian-South Vietnamese border and to assure supplies to maintain these troops, capacity to strike into South Vietnam.

A limited grant of U.S. arms aid to help defend the Phnom Penh region therefore probably would be intended more as a symbolic move, than a major military action. Even so, however, it could raise the risk that it was only the "opening wedge" of a Vietnam-type U.S. involvement, raising a clamor of domestic and international alarm.

Deposed Cambodian Prince Norodom Sihanouk is now in Peking threatening to return to Cambodia "shortly" with a "liberation army," the news was reported.

tion that North Vietnamese Premier Phan Van Dong joined Sihanouk there this week, but other Western sources now say the visitor was North Vietnamese Communist Party Leader Le Duan, on his way to Moscow via Peking.

Le Duan reportedly was greeted in Peking by Chinese Premier Chou En-lai. One major international question pending is whether China, North Vietnam and other Communist nations will back Sihanouk's return to the Communist-held sector of Cambodia. If they do, the Communist powers might then recoup the damage to their interests from the March 18 coup which overthrew Sihanouk, by physically supporting him as the "legal" ruler of Cambodia.

This would pose a major challenge to the western-oriented government of Premier Lon Nol.

Britain publicly turned down yesterday Lon Nol's appeal for arms aid.

"It would not be appropriate for us as co-chairman of the 1954 Geneva conference on Indochina to furnish military assistance," a Foreign Office spokesman said.

Britain has "welcomed" the "important initiative of France" in proposing an enlarged conference on Indochina, a British official said in Paris yesterday. But in fact no one, including France, has said exactly what kind of conference is contemplated except that it should recognize, as the French said on April 1, the "indivisibility" of the problems in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Spokesmen at the White House and State Department both said yesterday the United States is "interested in exploring" what "the Soviet government may have in mind" by Soviet Ambassador Yakov Malik's statement in New York Thursday.

Malik, the Soviet ambassador, said the Soviet Union "is aroused major international

interest when he said, "It appears to be that only a new Geneva conference could bring about a fresh solution and a relaxation of tension on the Indochinese peninsula . . ."

If the Soviet comment is "serious," one U.S. source typically said yesterday, it could have "really quite extraordinary implications."

Until now, the Soviet Union, in conformity with North Vietnam's position, has balked at all proposals for a Geneva-wide conference on Indochina, or even a conference on Laos, as President Nixon has proposed. North Vietnamese Politburo member Le Duc Tho, on leaving Paris last week, gave a cold shoulder to the French proposal, emphasizing that settlement of the Vietnamese problem must come first, "as a basis" for resolving the overall Indochina problem.

Many U.S. experts believe that Malik's sudden show of Soviet interest in an Indochina-wide conference must have been cleared in advance with North Vietnam, which could mean a shift of position in Hanoi.

Senate To Bare Laos Operations

A senate subcommittee headed by Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) announced it will lift on Monday part of the veil of secrecy on U.S. involvement in Laos. Meanwhile new congressional concern welled up over Cambodia.

Symington told a news conference yesterday that a transcript of Laos hearings will show that the "covert operation" there has cost the United States "billions of dollars, and what is more important, American lives."

Great misgivings were expressed, meanwhile, about the risk of "creeping U.S. involvement" in Cambodia by many participants at the opening of a two-day Congressional Conference on National Security Affairs.

It should be the duty of the Nixon administration to consult with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, parent of the Symington group, before any decision

SAN LEANDRO, CAL.
NEWS

STATINTL

M - 9,205

APR 17 1970

The War Spreads While The White House Fiddles

Twenty-nine days after a right-wing coup deposed Prince Sihanouk as Chief of State of Cambodia, the new government was appealing to any and all nations for whatever military help it could get.

It was at war with the Viet Cong.

It is well to recall the swift sequence of events which followed Sihanouk's ouster—a move which the Russians—and many Americans—believe might well have been precipitated by the CIA. That organization, originally formed as a super-spy system, has gravitated into a policy-making paramilitary organization which operates under the cloak of utter secrecy in the name of "national interest."

(It has been engaging in military operations in Laos, clandestinely for a long time, finally smoked out by the recent advances of the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese.

(Senator Albert Gore, member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, recently hinted that testimony from the CIA indicated that its Laotian military role was assumed on orders of the National Security Council. When the order was issued, no one knows except those directly involved, because the National Security Council, like the CIA, operates under wraps. Its decisions, however, affect the future of the country, for better or for worse).

While Sihanouk ruled Cambodia, that country managed to

and he kept his country out of the bloody mess in Vietnam and Laos.

While he was out of the country—under rightwing pressure—seeking aid to get the foreign troops out of his country, his political foes unseated him.

Within two weeks the new military government called for "volunteers" to man an army. And shortly thereafter, Cambodians were fighting Vietnamese. The conflict was only two weeks old when the news came that 100 villagers of Vietnamese extraction were massacred by Cambodian troops. At first the reports said they were killed by crossfire of Cambodian and Viet Cong troops, but it was later revealed that Cambodians performed the genocide.

And so while the Nixon Administration has been refusing to come to realistic grips with the Vietnamese war, it is spreading—to Laos, now Cambodia.

When will the citizens of this country demand of their government that it end the nightmare of Southeast Asia? When will our people awaken to see our country as it is seen by the rest of the world—as a giant power, meddling in the affairs of people 12,000 miles away, killing them, destroying their crops, ruining their land with poison chemicals?

The U.S. role is the outrage of the century, a blight on our nation's proud history, a cancer that will devour our ideals, our dreams, our nobility. For this

15 APR 1970

STATINTL

Nixon admits what our readers knew

Concerned about Laos? All of a sudden many people are—people who have never seen or heard of this small, Southeast Asian kingdom before are now finding its name in screaming newspaper headlines. President Nixon now is forced to admit that, yes, there are U.S. forces in Laos, and news analysts now tell their readers that, yes, Laos may become a "second Vietnam."

If you had been reading the Daily World last year, you would have a pretty good idea of what was going on in Laos, long before Nixon was compelled to tell you a small part of the truth about U.S. involvement there. You would have read:

May 24, 1969: the U.S. steps up its air raids on Laos five times above the previous levels; U.S. CIA agents in Laos are using the U.S. AID (Agency for International Development) Mission as a front for their Laotian activities.

May 27: A "Focus on Asia" column gives you the detailed background on U.S. bombing of Laos—who, what, when, where and why.

July 26: the Daily World charges that U.S. and Thai troops are fighting the Lao Patriotic Front; detailed background of the 1962 Geneva Agreement on Laos and 1963 CIA coup there.

Aug. 7: another "Focus on Asia" column tells you that the U.S. is using two secret bases in northern Laos (Sam Thong and Long Cheng) to bomb Lao liberated areas; the bases are full of U.S. Special Forces and Meo tribesmen. U.S. operation of the Lao economy (gold and opium) is detailed.

Aug. 13: the D.W. charges that in the secret bases of Sam Thong

and Long Cheng there are 1,500 U.S. troops, whose base is at Udorn, Thailand, and who are members of the 46th Special Forces unit. General Vang Pao is named as head of a 15,000 man "secret army" of Meo tribesmen backed by the CIA. The D.W. says there are 3,000 Thai troops at the bases too.

Sept. 23: the D.W. says the "secret" war in Laos is not so secret any more, gives a detailed breakdown of U.S. military involvement including numbers of "military attaches" (72) at the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane.

The D.W. gives a precise list of Air Force personnel and equipment in Laos: 2,000 USAF advisors, 3,500 maintenance personnel, types of aircraft and helicopters, where based and in what numbers.

Sept. 27: The D.W. strongly denies President Nixon's assertion that there are no U.S. forces involved in Laos, notes that there are thousands of U.S. military "advisors," "attaches" and CIA agents, using civilian covers to hide their activities.

March 6, 1970: President Nixon admits that there are "some" U.S. personnel involved in Laos, cites the total number as 1,040, says U.S. involvement is limited and defensive.

March 11: Pentagon admits U.S. military in Laos gets combat pay.

March 11: story breaks that CIA is involved in Laos, uses U.S. AID mission as a front, has set up a secret army of Meo tribesmen based on two secret centers, Sam Thong and Long Cheng.

Read what President Nixon is going to admit tomorrow, or six months from now, or never—read it today in the Daily World!

15 APR 1970

Sihanouk hits Cambodia massacre

Daily World Foreign Department
The Cambodian rulers claimed yesterday that 90 Vietnamese refugees killed April 10 in Prasaut, in the "Parrot's Beak" area

which juts into South Vietnam, were only victims of "the hazards of war." They denied reports by U.S. newsmen that the Vietnamese were massacred. They asserted the slain Vietnamese had been caught in a cross-fire between Cambodian soldiers and what it termed "Vietcong" forces.

Jack Walsh, of UPI, a veteran of 18 months' reporting of the Vietnam war, had said on the scene in Prasaut that the victims all seemed to have been killed at close range within the refugee compound after having been told to run by the armed Cambodians.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk, in a Radio Peking broadcast on Monday accused the Lon Nol government of massacring more than 500 since taking power.

In Cambodia's southern Takeo province, where regular army troops killed 109 pro-Sihanouk

demonstrators last week, the Lon Nol government charged that "several hundred Vietcong" invaded a military post and took police and army personnel prisoner, about 45 miles south of the capital of Phnom Penh. More fighting was centered in Chrey Thom, 36 miles east of the capital, where the Lon Nol regime said "1,000 Communists" had attacked the town.

In southern Laos, the Lao Patriotic Front took the town of Muong Phalane, about 50 miles east of the Thai border.

Muong Phalane was a base for the U.S. CIA's clandestine army in Laos. The U.S., through the CIA and Agency for International Development (AID), as well as other agencies, trains, equips and directs the "Royal Lao" armed forces, and finances the Lao military budget.

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO
VINDICATOR

E - 100,987

S - 155,644
APR 15 1970

War Has Ensnared Nixon, Newsman Tells YSU Rally

"Nixon has lost his chance politically to blame the war on the Democrats. It is now thoroughly his war and he is trapped as badly as Johnson was because he won't admit the whole thing is a mistake," Blair Clark, associate publisher of The New York Post, said Tuesday at the main spring moratorium activity at Youngstown State University.

"The prospects of the war in all of Indo-China are terribly ominous," he said, "and the war definitely is spreading to other countries like Cambodia and Laos."

"The evidence of the spreading war," he said, "lies in the fact that our hand, particularly the Central Intelligence Agency, has been active in both countries. The language in which we discuss the war is getting more and more bellicose. Nobody talks anymore about anything but the enemy, whereas Dean Rusk used to call them the other side."

"I feel there is a growing atmosphere of repression in this

country," he said, "so much so that a meeting like this one may actually be dangerous in a few months."

"This repression is led by (Vice President Spiro) Agnew and the threat of the liberty of the press and people who disagree with government policy," he said.

While seemingly touching all the bases, Clark referred to the moon shot as an investment of billions of dollars in the military-industrial complex.

He said, "We must think whether this whole program is the right way of investing billions of dollars. It is a perfect

trial complex selling its policies to the government."

Clark, former campaign manager for Eugene McCarthy and vice president of CBS News, was introduced by the Rev. Burton Cantrell.

His appearance was sponsored by the YSU Community of Concern and Youngstown Chapter of SANE, both organizations seeking to end the war in Vietnam.

STATINTL

UTICA, N.Y.
PRESS

M - 28,782

APR 14 1970

Goodell Again Presses Nixon on War

Senator Charles Goodell is carrying his independence still further in saying he would have "grave questions about support" for President Nixon in 1972, if the Vietnam war is intensified.

According to the most recent Gallup Poll, Mr. Goodell has considerable public support for his anti-escalation stand. For the first time, the poll showed that less than half of the voters support the President's handling of the war. The public support for Mr. Nixon's de-escalation plan has been eroding gradually since last fall.

THE PENTAGON HAS now announced that the latest troop withdrawal has been completed ahead of schedule, but we still have more than 400,000 troops in Vietnam.

In recent weeks, the war has escalated, not only in South Vietnam but also Laos and Cambodia, raising questions of our helping out in the latter two countries. Our military also has reportedly urged Mr. Nixon to delay further troop withdrawals, pending a clarification of the Communists' intentions.

There has also been the temptation for us to expand our operations into Cambodia and to beef up our CIA efforts in Laos. Fortunately, the White House appears to be playing it cool on both questions.

In light of the new situation, a new peace demonstration this week, and the growing lack of support the President's war strategy, Mr. Nixon is likely to seek to bolster his position when he addresses the public on the war this Thursday night.

MR. GOODELL MAY BE foolhardy in attacking his own party's President in the senator's biggest election year, but so far

he has had amazing success, winning popular support and his party's endorsement. Perhaps Mr. Nixon will announce a speed-up of troop withdrawals Thursday night, further enhancing Mr. Goodell's position.

A speed-up would be most welcome news for the public, as well as Mr. Goodell.

STATINTL

HOUSTON, TEX.
POST APR 13 1970

M - 289,385
S - 322,763

Sound-Off

What is a patriot, in Laos, in U.S.?

... I was intrigued by the patent incongruity of ... "Can we learn from history?" (By Carl T. Rowan, Post April 1).

A valid predicate was laid when Rowan stated little bekknown facts, such as:

"Dulles prevailed ... to make Laos a ... 'bastion against Communism,' so the U.S. poured in some \$300 million by 1960 ... to build a Royal Laotian Army of 25,000 men that would be a carbon copy of the U.S. Army.

"... the U.S. maneuvered to oust Souvanna and replace him with ... Phoumi Nosavan, who was hustled back to Laos from Paris by CIA operatives ...

"... So he (President Kennedy) ... worked out a compromise that restored Souvanna to the premiership of a coalition government ...

Now for the incongruity.

"SOUVANNA, FACED with ... an OBVIOUS EFFORT BY NORTH VIETNAM TO OVERWHELM his country, turned out to be anything but the PRO-RED PATSY (emphasis added) ...

Who do we, as Americans, think we are? We funnel \$300 million (\$1.50 for every man, woman and child in the U.S.) into Laos, to make a CARBON COPY of the U.S. Army, then we not only maneuver to oust Souvanna, Laos' premier, but are presumptuous enough to provide his replacement. Not satisfied, we restore Souvanna, whom we have ousted previously, to premier.

By what right, privilege or power do we enter into a country, try to stamp a "carbon copy" of our Army on their Army, (which can be used against the people as well as for them); oust, replace, and re-oust the replacement premier with the premier we originally ousted?

Rowan talks of an OBVIOUS EFFORT by NORTH VIETNAM to OVERWHELM Laos. If theirs is obvious, ours is blatant.

The only overwhelming, I can see, is that done by the CIA AND THE U. S. government. Why speak of the obvious effort of North Vietnam, and ignore an equally obvious effort (and far more successful) of the U. S. to overwhelm?



Prince Souvanna Phouma of Laos

STATINTL

EDITORIALS

The Third Indo-China War

It is the nature of governments to deceive. In the perspective of its two-century existence, the government of the United States is no worse than others. In fact, in its early history, its candor was considerably better than the average. Now, however, it appears to be making up for lost time. Mr. Nixon may plead, plausibly enough, that Vietnam is not his war. He did, however, undertake to get us out of it. The plain fact is that the war is being extended, and so far Mr. Nixon has done nothing to prevent its spread. On the contrary, his policy of Vietnamization is dragging us deeper into the Indo-Chinese quagmire. Unless he takes forthright action to arrest this trend, it will be difficult to avoid the suspicion that he is not averse to developments that will enable him to keep massive American military power in Asia, and that recent events have been largely of our making.

Of course, that is not the official scenario. Officially, we were taken by surprise when the coup ousted Prince Sihanouk; we are now waiting for the dust to settle, and perhaps hoping for events to take a turn that might redound to our advantage. There is a suggestion that Sihanouk was overthrown because the enemy is losing, is being pushed back, and that this accounts for the turn to the right in Cambodia which, though nominally neutralist, had been giving shelter to some 40,000 to 60,000 North Vietnamese or Vietcong troops.

That scenario warrants scrutiny. It begins in Laos, where there was a tacit standstill with the enemy. It was incomplete, to be sure, but fighting was at a low level. The CIA upset that balance by egging on its mercenaries, deployed with the aid of American "advisers." The enemy retaliated and seized a major piece of the Plain of Jars. Did the CIA plan it that way? They may have been as innocent as unborn babes, but that is not their usual role. Anyhow, it happened; and it now appears that Laos is in dire straits—another domino is in danger of falling. There is one difference, however, from the earlier domino game: the public does not seem to be concerned. It does not demand that we "save" Laos; it would rather that we got out of Southeast Asia, and the sooner the better, as long as we retain some shreds of superpower dignity.

The illicit scenario continues with the coup in Cambodia. Whoever pulled the strings, the result was very much to the liking of the Pentagon and the CIA, and perhaps of an Administration bent on keeping a big, sprawling foothold in Asia. (See Michael Klare: "The Great South Asian War," *The Nation*, March 9.) It passes understanding that Prince Sihanouk's rivals should have acted so boldly, unless they had substantial covert backing. It may be assumed that the CIA no longer delivers sledgehammer blows, as in 1953 when Mossadegh was eliminated in Iran. Whatever the CIA threw into the scales may

have been tossed indirectly—perhaps through Thai intermediaries. (We know that Thai troops have been fighting on the American side in Laos, and that the Thai satraps are unexcelled in intrigue.)

So now the Vietcong and North Vietnamese who have been using the Cambodian sanctuary are caught in a squeeze between, on the east, the South Vietnamese, aided by reinforced American detachments close to the border and by American gunships firing into Cambodia, and on the west, such forces as the new government of Cambodia can muster. From the standpoint of the Pentagon and the CIA it is a much more agreeable situation than when Prince Sihanouk held the reins. It is worth noting, also, that General Westmoreland has long advocated military action against Cambodia.

Can our Southeast Asian allies act in matters of such importance without American approval and some kind of commitment that, if the gamble turns against them, Uncle Sam will not let them go down the drain? The Cambodians say they are not asking for American military help now. They do not say they will not ask tomorrow.

What has happened took considerable rigging. Did the President know about it? Did he want to know about it? How much control has Mr. Kissinger got over operations in the field? Does even General Abrams know exactly what goes on while he runs the war from a desk in Saigon and with an occasional visit to the numerous fronts for which he, or the CIA, is responsible?

In the news these latest developments are referred to as the second Indo-China war. The count seems short. First there was the war in which the French lost the flower of their officer corps and got the *coup de grâce* at Dienbienphu. Then there was the second Indo-China war, engineered mainly by Lyndon B. Johnson, and which proved his political nemesis. Now we have the third war. Will it rescue Mr. Nixon politically, or ruin him? He must be thinking hard; his risks are not small.

13 APR 1970

STATINTL

WANTED: SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE

U.S. officials maintain they will send no ground troops into Laos or Cambodia—but civilian mercenaries appear to be something else again. CIA agents in Saigon are actively recruiting both American and non-American civilians there—construction men, U.S. Government employees, men who have left the Army but can't quite bring themselves to leave the war—to lead raiding parties of Meo tribesmen against the North Vietnamese in Laos. One such offer last week included a salary of \$1,000 a week and a week's vacation in Taiwan for every four weeks in the field. Prospective employees are asked to submit résumés in Bangkok, where there is less chance of unwelcome publicity than in Saigon. ✓

THE END OF THE SIHANOUK TRAIL

Sihanoukville, the port in southern Cambodia that funneled supplies to the Communists in South Vietnam along the "Sihanouk Trail," has been entirely closed by the new regime in Phnom Penh. But from the Communist point of view, this is not a particularly heavy blow. Intelligence reports indicate that no new Communist supplies had arrived in the port for the past year and that Prince Sihanouk had held on to earlier shipments in order to dribble them out to Communist forces for political leverage.

ROK-U.S.S.R.: FADING ENMITY?

The Republic of Korea has invited the Soviet Union to send delegates to the Asian Development Bank's convention in Seoul this month. This is the friendliest gesture the South Koreans have made to the Russians, longtime patrons of the rival North Korean regime, in twenty years. With North Korea drawing closer to China and the United States talking about reducing or withdrawing its 55,000-man garrison in South Korea, Seoul is apparently looking for new friends wherever it can find them.

Hanoi Troops Hammer Area Of U.S. Aid Base in Laos

By TAMMY ARBUCKLE
Special to The Star

VIENTIANE — Fighting flared again in North Laos over the weekend, reliable sources said today, when more than 500 North Vietnamese infantrymen assaulted government positions around battered Sam Thong.

North Vietnamese troops captured government positions west and north of Sam Thong, the major U.S. support base, 75 miles northeast of here, but failed to penetrate the base itself.

Twenty-seven North Vietnamese bodies were found. Casualties from the defending Meo guerrilla forces were described as "moderate."

However, Lao army ambulances, one driven by an American, were passing constantly between Vientiane airport where casualties were unloaded from

American aircraft, and the Vientiane military hospital.

Thirty-one more North Vietnamese were killed in other fighting around Sam Thong this weekend. Eight were killed when a patrol penetrated within 1,000 yards of Sam Thong's airstrip. Eight more died in a Meo ambush near Sam Thong and 15 were said to have been killed by U.S. air strikes against North Vietnamese troops on route 4 east of Sam Thong.

The weekend fighting follows the pattern of North Vietnamese light probes and infantry attacks against weaker government positions.

American and Meo commanders based in Long Chien, south of Sam Thong, were countering this by airlifting troops from hilltop to hilltop, keeping the North Vietnamese baffled.

These troops were carried by light aircraft flown by American civilians working for Air America, which has the Central Intelligence Agency as one of its customers. The Americans were coming under fire.

This morning three 122mm rockets landed within 100 yards of the Long Chien airstrip which the Americans use.

In other fighting in Laos, North Vietnamese troops for the fourth consecutive day hit Boualoum, the last government guerrilla outpost in government hands north of the Plain of Jars.

Laotians were pushed from one mountaintop position when they said they ran out of ammunition and water. This Lao unit suffered no casualties.

In South Laos, Communist troops overran the Tang Vej guerrilla position west of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The North Vietnamese retreated this morning after U.S. air strikes which the Lao estimated after retaking the position cost 60 North Vietnamese casualties, mostly wounded.

THE NEW YORKER
11 April 70

STATINTL



THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

ON March 24th, Representative John V. Tunney, a California Democrat who seeks his party's nomination for United States senator, addressed the Wilshire Chamber of Commerce in Los Angeles and made some charges about our involvement in Laos that have not, as far as we have been able to learn, previously been made. We yield the floor to the Congressman:

We are today engaged... in a secret war in Laos, a tribal war in which the C.I.A. has committed the United States to support a faction of Meo tribesmen, led by General Vang Pao, whose sole objective is to dominate other factions of this opium-producing Meo tribe throughout Northern Laos. The C.I.A. has involved us in this covert operation, which is being fought around the Plain of Jars, more than one thousand miles away from the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The Administration has deliberately veiled in secrecy our deepening involvement in an opium tribal war which has the potential to engulf all of Southeast Asia in a full-fledged conflict which would have global repercussions... On grounds of moral indignation, as a defender of democracy, we have unwittingly allowed ourselves to become involved in a situation which, to the Meo tribesman or Laotian warlord, has very little to do with his major cash crop—opium. For this tribal war has, as one of its prizes, an area capable of producing, on an annual basis, four to ten tons of marketable opium. This is equal to from two to six million dollars in Laotian currency. Refined as heroin and sold on the streets of Los Angeles, it would bring nearly nine hundred million dollars... The clandestine yet official operations of the United States government could be aiding and abetting heroin traffic here at home.

Representative Tunney is in the middle of a hard campaign, and this is, of course, campaign oratory. It so happens, though, that his adviser on Southeast Asian affairs is Professor John T. McAlister, Jr., of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, at Princeton, who is the author of "Viet-Nam: The Origins of Revolution" and is probably the most eminent scholar in the Southeast Asian field. Suspecting that it was on his authority that the candidate made these extraordinary assertions, we checked with the Professor and found that this was indeed the case. He would, he said, swear to the truth of them in any forum. The next move, we should think, would be up to Senator Fulbright.

BLOOMSBURG, PA.

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Tight Rope Time

EVENTS IN Southeast Asia have made this a time for tight rope walking in Washington if we are to avoid increased military involvement there. Both in our capital and in Moscow caution is evident.

Tension there has heightened because of internal conflict in Cambodia, for Communist pressure on the Cambodians has increased since the ouster of Prince Sihanouk and inability of the new premier to consolidate power. Outside pressure apparently can do little to restore stability and might involve more risks than benefits for this country.

Complicating the situation is the bombing of supply lines within Laos, which have been used with little impediment by the North Vietnamese to furnish support to guerrillas in South Vietnam.

Secrecy shrouds the American role in Laos, but the personnel there is sufficiently large to constitute a danger. A month ago President Nixon said the number was 616, with an additional 424 employed on contract to the government or contractors. The civilians perform what amounts to military functions under auspices of the U.S. Embassy, the Agency for International Development, and two companies under charter to the latter — Air America and Continental Air Services. More than 200 Air Force and Army attaches, regular military officers, serve as advisers in the field and as aerial observers and spotters for bombing or artillery missions. The Central Intelligence Agency also is

involved, but personnel does not show up on either Embassy or Aid payrolls.

Planes bombing supply lines are based outside Laos, but of the Americans employed under government contracts, 200 are pilots and 100 ground employes working for the two air lines.

At a time when we are attempting to reduce our forces in Vietnam, it would be foolhardy to get mixed up in the uncertain situations prevailing in both Laos and Cambodia.

N. Viet Troops Find No. 1 Enemy in Laos

Samuel Jameson, chief of THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE'S Tokyo bureau, is presently touring southeast Asia to report on the changing military situation there. Today's article tells of the fight being waged by the Meo guerrilla army against the North Vietnamese troops in Laos.

BY SAMUEL JAMESON
[Chief of Tokyo Bureau]
[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

LANDING SITE 37, Laos, April 8 — The Number One enemy of North Vietnamese troops fighting in northern Laos is the Meo tribesman, and a visit to this outpost showed why.

Fifteen thousand Meo refugees have organized their own camp and have set up what might become a bustling commercial center here. Americans are providing rice and small quantities of other items, but most of the work has been done by the Meo themselves.

Another Grass Airstrip

Nestled in lush tropical mountains covered with haze, Landing Site 37 is just another grass airstrip on the maps of Lewis Laxwell, an Air America pilot who flew this reporter here in a chartered single engine Pilatus Porter craft.

A Meo teacher said there were two villages here called Nong Phu and Nuong Phuon. Neither of them had more than 200 inhabitants before the Meo refugees started pouring in.

Most of the tribespeople fled from Sam Thong, a major air supply and relief center 14 miles east of here. It was abandoned March 18 when North Vietnamese troops started artillery attacks. Troops of Meo Maj. Gen Vang Pao moved back in last Tuesday.

Financed by CIA

Since then sporadic fighting has been centered on Long Cheng south of Sam Thong. A clandestine guerrillas army organized and financed by the central intelligence agency has its headquarters in secrecy-shrouded Long Cheng, 90 miles north of Vientiane. Vang Pao, leader of the 15,000-man pro-government Meo guerrilla army, also works out of Long Cheng.

Altho the Meo general has broadcast appeals urging his people to come back to Sam Thong, the Meos at Landing Site 37 showed no signs of leaving their new found home.

Robert McClymonds, 51, of Walton, Kas., said 1,000 new refugees have walked into the camp every day since March 27 when he arrived. McClymonds normally works as an agricultural adviser with the American aid mission. However, he has been pressed into duty as a refugee worker as a result of the North Vietnamese attacks.

Every afternoon an Air America plane takes McClymonds back to Vientiane for the night.

Yanks Leave at Night

"It's not dangerous here but there is a standing order that all Americans must leave the field at night," he said. "I guess they don't want to take any chances about Americans getting involved here."

At Landing Site 37, McClymonds, duties are mainly supervisory. He makes sure the Meo get enough rice and such commodities as salt and canned meat. He also decides who gets priority to board the Air America planes that land from time to time.

He watched as an American C-46 cargo plane flew overhead and dropped a load of rice bags. The bags hit on an open hillside across the valley on each of five passes. Then the C-46 made one more pass, this time straight thru the valley, to signal the air drop was finished.

Carry to Warehouse

The tribe members set out in pairs and carried the bags on a pole stretched over their shoulders to a makeshift warehouse. There women lined up to get their family allotment for the day. Each of them carried a "ration card"—actually just a scrap of cardboard on which their name, the quantity of rice to which they were entitled, and the signature of the headman.

The process was completed without a sign of chaos or any competition to get more than the allotted share of rice.

From time to time the sonic boom of a jet interrupted the serenity. Later, back in Vientiane, military authorities re-

ported another American bombing raid on North Vietnamese positions had been conducted from bases in Thailand. Clouds of haze, however, have curtailed the raids on most days since the beginning of the year.

Elsewhere at Landing Site 37 a new market was thriving.

Shipped in by General

Meo women sat before displays of cigarets, toothpaste, detergents, soap, crackers, candy, flashlight batteries, watermelon, butchered buffalo meat, and even canned Asahi beer from Japan.

Laxwell explained that Gen. Vang Pao had several American planes to use as he wished and had shipped in the commodities from Vientiane.

"They pay for them, of course, and the profits go to the widows fund," Laxwell said.

Altho a few families were still living in tents, most of the Meo were burning out patches of forest and erecting log frames for new houses. The tribespeople, nomadic by nature, apparently were settling down to stay. In one completed house a man was lying on a wooden bed smoking opium which is found in abundance here.

Have Yank Weapons

Meo soldiers, wearing American khaki uniforms and carrying American M-16 rifles, mingled in the crowds.

"The soldiers came to see their families and help them build new houses," McClymonds said.

"They will go back when they can hitch a ride on a plane."

Most of the refugees found their way to Landing Site 37 on foot, a four-day walk thru the mountains from Sam Thong. Diarrhea, dysentery, and malaria—diseases common among the Meo whose diets are painfully monotonous—have broken out with increased frequency, McClymonds said.

Otherwise there were few

signs of suffering at Landing Site 37.

Meo women and some children wore gold earrings and

silver neckbands. It was their way of keeping their wealth in a land without banks and savings accounts.

The Meo are a dramatic contrast to the Montagnard hill tribes of neighboring Viet Nam. Whereas the Montagnards are dark skinned, the Meo look almost like Chinese. Unlike the Montagnards,

Bodily cleanliness and sanitation also appear to be greater concern for the Meo than for the Montagnard.

The adaptability and relative sophistication of the Meo, as seen at Landing Site 37, helped explain why the North Vietnamese have singled out their troops and their leader, Gen. Vang Pao, as the major target of the current offensive.

Fighting recently has slackened off but western military observers predict new attacks will occur.

Not a True Match

The Meo, however, are not fighting for Laos, a political entity which exists more on maps than it does in the hearts of the people who live within its borders. They are fighting for their homes.

In limited engagements, the Meo are tough adversaries but they are not a match for the full force of the modern North Vietnamese army.

In surprise, lightning attacks last August, the Meo under Vang Pao seized the strategic Plain of Jars with support from American jet bombers.

The Meos captured between 6,000 to 8,000 tons of North Vietnamese supplies and weapons which had been assembled over the years in the strategic plain.

Nobody, however, expected them to hold the plain. The attack was meant only as a punitive, restraining action against the North Vietnamese. When the 312th and the 316th North Vietnamese army divisions pushed into the Plain of Jars in February, the Meo retreated to their strongholds at Sam Thong and Long Cheng.

Today they are again battling for their homes. In the process, they are fighting for Laos.

9 April 1970

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Peter Dale Scott: Laos, Nixon, and the CIA

STATINTL STATINTL

Laos: The Story Nixon Won't Tell

Peter Dale Scott

President Nixon cannot expect peace in Vietnam while escalating the war in Laos. His Key Biscayne statement on Laos of March 6 itself draws attention to the connection between the two conflicts, which has since been underlined by Vice President Agnew. In reality the so-called "Vietnamization" in 1969 of the ground war in South Vietnam was balanced by a sharp escalation of the US air war in Laos, beyond the range of inquisitive TV camera teams. This escalation is now rationalized (though not admitted) by the President's statement on Laos, which puts forth a grossly misleading history of North Vietnamese "persistent subversion" and "invasion."

This story was put together long before the present administration. Many of its allegations were supplied years ago by US intelligence sources, who had a stake in misrepresenting the Laotian war which they had themselves largely helped to create. The statement must however be answered, since it is at least as misleading as the intelligence reports of North-Vietnamese and Chinese aggression in South Vietnam, which preceded our air war in that country. Of course, the escalation in the long run will involve two sides, and some day historians can analyze the whole involvement in Laos of Thailand, the Philippines, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, the United States, Taiwan, and China.

It is important, however, to see that it has been not North Vietnam but the United States, and more particularly its apparatus of civil and military intelligence agencies, which has been consistently guilty of the initial subversion of whatever order has been established in Laos through international agreements. Thus the President's statement should be examined in the light of indubitable CIA and US air force activities that he wholly leaves out.

Although the present war in Laos the then Premier Prince Souvanna dates back to 1959, the President's Phouma, received more votes than any statement is totally silent about the other candidate.) 1959-61 period. This is understandable, since virtually every independent observer has condemned the subversive activities in Laos of the CIA and other US agencies during the period when Mr. Nixon was Vice President. A RAND Corporation report on Laos concluded, for example, that in 1959 it was not the pro-Communist Pathet Lao but the right-wing Sananikone government (which had been installed by US intrigue and was counseled by US advisers) that "precipitated the final crisis which led to war in Laos."

This "final crisis" followed a probe by a government patrol into the small but sensitive disputed area of Huong Lap on the North Vietnamese border, which had been governed as part of Vietnam in the days of the French. When the patrol was, predictably, fired upon, the government charged the North Vietnamese with frontier incursions and claimed that this was related to a planned insurrection by the Pathet Lao. It then obtained a vote of emergency powers from the Assembly, and soon ordered the two remaining battalions of the Pathet Lao to be integrated forthwith into the national army.

The Pathet Lao had previously (in November 1957) agreed to this integration, as part of a political settlement in which they received two Cabinet posts and were permitted to participate in elections for specially created seats in the National Assembly. In this election the Pathet Lao and their allies (the party of left-leaning neutralist Quinim Pholsena) obtained 32 percent of the votes and thirteen of the twenty-one contested seats, showing that they had grown considerably in popularity in the four years since the 1954 Agreements. (Prince Souphanouvong, the Pathet Lao leader and half-brother of

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in *A Thousand Days*, has recorded the response of the US to the election:

Washington decided to install a reliably pro-Western regime. CIA spooks put in their appearance, set up a Committee for the Defense of National Interest (CDNI) and brought back from France as its chief an energetic, ambitious and devious officer named Phoumi Nosavan. Prince Souvanna, who had shown himself an honest and respected if impulsive leader, was forced out of office [by a withholding of US aid and CIA encouragement of a parliamentary crisis, allegedly through the use of bribes]... a veteran politician named Phoumi Sananikone took his place.

The Pathet Lao were then excluded from the new Cabinet approved on August 18, 1958.

In May 1959 one Pathet Lao battalion refused, understandably, to be assimilated under the new right-wing government, and it decamped to a valley on the North Vietnamese border. The Sananikone government then declared that the Pathet Lao had committed an act of open rebellion and that only a military solution appeared possible. It thus by its own actions deflected the Pathet Lao from the role of political opposition into a military insurgency for which it was poorly prepared, and hence it was forced increasingly to depend on North Vietnamese support. (By 1969 this included regular units of the North Vietnamese army.)

In August 1959 the government itself received a large increase in US military support by claiming, falsely, that it had been "invaded" by a North

cont.

Laos Hearing Records Set For Release

By the Associated Press

Sen. Stuart Symington says agreement has been reached with the Nixon administration to release after five months of negotiations the transcript of closed door hearings on Laos.

Symington, chairman of the Foreign Relations subcommittee on national commitments, told the Senate yesterday the record to be released—within two weeks—is a “sanitized version.”

He said it deals in part “with the dangers of past administration policy in Laos which permitted military involvement and escalation to be wrapped in official secrecy, and thus to grow without the benefit of proper public discussion.”

“Those of us who have worked to have that secrecy dropped—as it was with the President’s March 6 statement on Laos—hope the unhappy lesson of Laos secrecy will not be lost on this administration as it designs its policy toward Cambodia,” the Missouri Democrat said.

Symington aides said about 10 percent of the transcript has been deleted. At one point, they said, the administration sought to delete 60 percent.

Besides Laos, four more transcripts remain to be issued, on Thailand, Taiwan, Japan-Okinawa, and Korea.

Laos Head Tells Views to Tribune

Samuel Jameson, chief of the Tokyo bureau of THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE, is in southeast Asia to study the widening military and political situation there. The following is the first of several articles.

BY SAMUEL JAMESON
[Chief of Tokyo Bureau]
[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

VIENTIANE, Laos, April 7—Premier Souvanna Phouma of Laos said for the first time in an exclusive interview here today that he had not authorized and did not control American bombing raids on the Ho Chi Minh trail in southern Laos.

The 68-year-old prince said, however, that he did not object to such raids.

"No, we do not control them [the bombing raids on the Ho Chi Minh trail]," he said. "How could we control them? The only way to control them would be to prohibit American planes from flying over Laos. Even then, if planes came in from the sea, how could we stop them? How could we even know they were bombing? There are no villages in the area. The area is all mountains and jungles."

Explains His Position

Souvanna made his comments in the course of a detailed explanation of how he originally asked the United States to start aerial missions over northern Laos, an area unaffected by the Ho Chi Minh trail.

"There is no written agreement [giving the United States permission to bomb northern Laos]. It is an oral agreement," he said.

He said it was concluded in May, 1964, when communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese troops attacked the forces of Kong Le, then the leader of

the neutralist army, in the Plain of Jars. Souvanna said he asked his half brother, Prince Souphanouvong, titular head of the Pathet Lao to stop the fighting. Souphanouvong refused, claiming that the battle involved only neutralist forces fighting among themselves, not Pathet Lao or North Vietnamese.

Asks for Help

When the plain fell, Souvanna said he decided to ask for help.

The prince said he made two requests to the United States. One was for arms and ammunition for the neutralist army, which had run out of ammunition for its Russian-made weapons. The other was for American reconnaissance flights over roads from North Viet Nam into northern Laos.

Nothing in the agreement covered the Ho Chi Minh trail, he indicated. The roads covered by the agreement are in northern Laos and are not connected with the Ho Chi Minh trail farther south in the Laos panhandle.

The step-up in American bombing in northern Laos to full-fledged tactical bombing missions totaling more than 400 a day occurred according to Laotian requests, he said.

Souvanna said specific requests for bombing missions are made by Laos government guerrillas or regular army troops in the field. They are relayed by radio to communication planes in the air and from there to air bases. Souvanna did not mention it but the bases to which he referred are in Thailand.

The premier said he had told the North Vietnamese ambassador in Vientiane that Laos would call off the American bombing raids in northern Laos if the North Vietnamese withdrew to the Ho Chi Minh trail or back to North Viet Nam.

"Then it would be up to North Vietnamese and the Americans to make an agreement covering the bombing of the Ho Chi Minh trail. That is not our affair," he said.

The leader also defended the secrecy which has shrouded American air support of Laotian army units. "The North Vietnamese are still coming into Laos but they refuse to admit it. Why should we tell the public in order to let the Communists know what we are doing?" he said.

He added that foreign journalists were prohibited from visiting frontline Laotian units because Lao commanders were "too busy" to care for their needs.

Admits Thais Helping

Earlier at a press conference given for newsmen visiting with H. Ross Perot, Texas billionaire, Souvanna acknowledged that Thai nationals were fighting in Laos. He denied, however, that any units of the Thai armed forces are in Laos. There are more Laotians in Thailand than in Laos and some of these have come to fight in Laos as individuals, he said.

He reiterated declarations that he would not ask the United States to send ground combat troops to Laos but

emphasized that continued American military and economic support is essential.

"We are fighting for our survival. The United States must understand we can do nothing without its help," he said.

He also said he would send a reply to a five-point Pathet Lao peace proposal in two or three days.

Denies POW Information

In another development Mrs. Dorothy Bodden of 5707 Walnut av., Downers Grove, met the Pathet Lao representative in Vientiane, Sot Petrasi. He told Mrs. Bodden he had no information concerning her son, army sgt. Timothy Roy Bodden, 27. The son has been listed as missing for more than 3 years. Four other wives of missing service men accompanied her.

All of the women's requests were rejected with a pat statement that nothing could be accomplished until the United States stops its bombing of Laos.

However, the Pathet Lao representative did tell the women that about 100 of 1,200 Americans shot down over Laos were alive and being held in caves and camps near the places where they were shot down.

8 APR 1970

STATINTL

U.S. building roads in Nepal

KATHMANDU — The U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), recently identified as the CIA "front" for operations in Laos and Thailand, is busily engaged in building a road in Nepal, the strategically-located Himalayan kingdom between India and the People's Republic of China.

The road starts in western Nepal, on the Indian border at Dhangarhi, and will eventually tie in with another road to be built to Jumla, 100 miles to the north. A third road is planned, which will link Pokhara, in central Nepal, with the Mushtang enclave about 90 miles to the north. Pokhara is already connected by road with a network that extends south to the border with India. The Indian government, with Nepalese agreement, maintains reconnaissance teams on the northern Nepalese frontier with China.

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Laotians Repel Hanoi Troops

By TAMMY ARBUCKLE
Special to The Star

VIENTIANE—North Vietnamese forces attacked Ban Na Lao, a village near Paksane in east-central Laos, at dawn today. Eleven Communists were killed when a Lao "Spooky" gunship broke up the attack.

Three Lao government soldiers were wounded.

At the key guerrilla base of Long Chien, meantime, a massive American logistics effort was underway, sources reported.

Communists were reported to be firing occasional rocket shells into the base, where at least 38 Americans are aiding the logistics effort. Twenty shells were fired into the base this morning, hitting houses and causing casualties.

Light aircraft and helicopters belonging to Air America, the CIA-chartered line, are landing almost every minute and are ferrying troops and ammunition to outposts around Long Chien.

One American helicopter, which was carrying its load of ammunition slung on a net underneath—dropped the load when the net broke.

Four thousand of Long Chien's 40,000 Meo tribesmen have moved back into the town they fled last month, but many Meo soldiers are staying with their families in the surrounding hills.

Thai infantry and artillery men dressed in unmarked fatigues were said to be the main factor in the stiffening town defense at Long Chien.

American jets today knocked out a 120-millimeter mortar which had been harassing government forces sweeping out from Tam Bleung, 12 miles north of Long Chien, headquarters of Meo Gen. Vang Pao.

APILENE, TEX.
REPORTER NEWS

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APR 7 1970

Neutralism Gone

The overthrow of Cambodia's Prince Norodom Sihanouk has done at least one thing: It has destroyed the myth of neutralism in Southeast Asia.

Ever since the Geneva accords of 1962, which provided for the neutralism of Laos and Cambodia, neutralism has led an uneasy life. North Vietnam supported the Pathet Lao in Laos, and the United States supported the Vientiane regime through the CIA. In Cambodia, wily Prince Sihanouk tried to buy neutralism by winking at the use of a part of his country for the movement of North Vietnamese troops and supplies into South Vietnam. He also tried to play Hanoi against Peking and Moscow.

Now in exile, alternatively in Moscow and Peking, Prince Sihanouk has begun his bid for a return to power. The result may be a civil war. North Vietnam may, indeed, end up with control of Laos and Cambodia, a nationalist dream of centuries.

So much for neutralism in a bitterly divided world. Maybe the late John Foster Dulles was right when he argued that neutralism was immoral.

AIR AMERICA: ANYTHING GOES

It doesn't pipe Mantovani into its cabins, dress stewardesses in colorful Puccis or serve *boeuf bourguignon* on any of its flights. And yet Air America is one of the largest U.S. airlines, ranking behind National and ahead of Northeast in the number of its planes and personnel. Air America can afford to be indifferent to the extras provided by other airlines because it has only one customer to please—the United States Government—for which it performs a wide variety of services connected with the American military involvement in Southeast Asia. As a rule, these services go unpublicized. Recently, however, Air America came into the spotlight when it flew several hundred Thai troops into Laos to help the CIA-sponsored "secret army" of Gen. Vang Pao defend the outpost of Long Cheng from Communist attack.

Although in practical terms it is an operating arm of the CIA, Air America is owned by a private aviation-investment concern called Pacific Corp. Its managing director and chief executive, a large, affable man named George Doole Jr., laughs heartily when questioned about dealings with intelligence organizations—but hedges his answer. "I don't know all of our customers' private business and relations," he said last week. "So help me, that's a fact." But while that may be so, Air America's motto, "Anything, Anytime, Anywhere—Professionally," suggests the company plays by rather free-wheeling rules.

"I guess we carry about everything except bombs under our wings," says Air America Saigon manager E.J. Theisen. And in fact, the range of the company's activities almost lives up to its motto. CIA agents working in the Phoenix program—

a campaign to ferret out Viet Cong operatives in South Vietnam—fly Air America when they need to move a high-level prisoner. Green Berets use the airline to carry supplies to Montagnard mercenaries. And according to Theisen, even the U.S.'s supersecret Special Operations Group in Saigon, which works almost exclusively behind enemy lines, relies on Air America for some of its transport needs within South Vietnam.

Contract: At present, though, the bulk of the line's work is in Laos, where it drops tons of rice to Meo tribesmen under a contract with the Agency for International Development, carries troops to the front and evacuates refugees. But when it comes to discussing operations behind Pathet Lao lines, only miles from the North Vietnamese border, Vientiane manager James Cunningham Jr. is not giving away any secrets. "We operate on a you-call, we-haul basis," he said. "We don't go into details."

For its varied operations, Air America uses a fleet of some 150 planes—mostly unmarked twin-engine Volpar Beechcrafts and Swiss-built Pilatus Porters. Its 600 pilots, many of them Vietnam veterans, make as much as \$25,000 a year—and earn every penny of it. Under all kinds of weather—and often under fire as well—they fly into remote jungle airstrips no bigger than football fields and wear thick gold bracelets, which they can barter for food and medicine in case of forced landings in remote regions. But in spite of the risks they take, the pilots are rarely the daredevil Steve Canyons one might expect. "They're in it for the money," comments one old Asian hand. "These guys all read Barron's for stock-market tips."

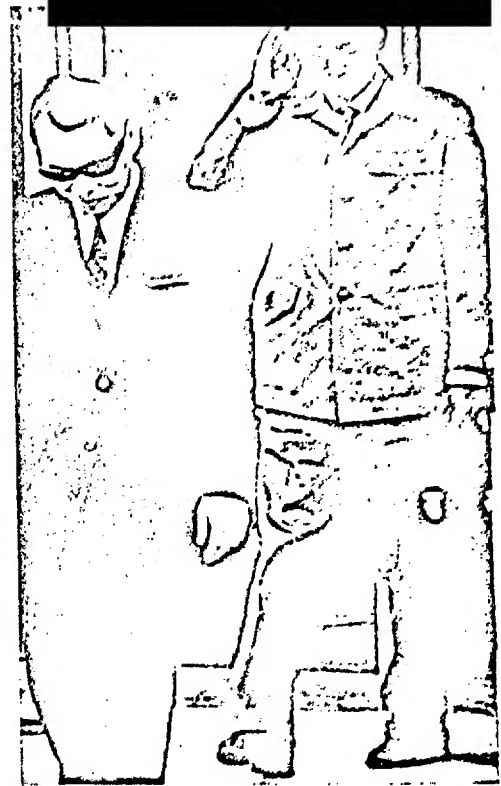
STATINTL



THE WAR IN VIETNAM



Asian tinderbox: Cambodian leaders parade as Red envoy arrives in Laos



Indochina: The Calm Before the Storm?

In a land where he was once slavishly adored, Prince Norodom Sihanouk's name was suddenly mud. The cabal that overthrew the Cambodian Chief of State two weeks ago diligently set about destroying his reputation in the hope of heading off any popular outcry for his return. Newspapers ran obscene cartoons of Sihanouk and his wife, Monique, and the same radio announcers who had sung his praises so extravagantly a short time ago now vied in berating him. Pictures of Sihanouk and his mother, Queen Sisowath Kossamak, were ripped from walls all over the country, and there was talk of abolishing the monarchy. As a special gesture in honor of the coup, Phnom Penh's Sihanouk Street was renamed "March 18, 1970, 1 p.m. Street."

To those who had feared that the Cambodian coup might trigger a wider war in Indochina, these activities seemed reassuringly parochial. "At this point," said a junior diplomat in Saigon, "the so-called 'Indochina war' is the greatest non-event in history." But later, events took a more ominous turn. In Cambodia, pro-Sihanouk rioters forced the government to call up reserves, and there were unconfirmed reports that Viet Cong troops were moving toward Phnom Penh. In Laos, the Communists appeared to be massing for another attack. And in South Vietnam, the government took advantage of the Cambodian coup by attacking enemy forces across the border. In short, it seemed much too early to write off the possibility that Indochina might explode.

In Laos, the expected Communist attack on the key government outpost at Long Cheng did not materialize, and it

looked as though the North Vietnamese and their local allies, the Pathet Lao, had stalled after taking nearby Sam Thong. But the Laotians were not yet out of the woods. "The North Vietnamese apparently tried to take both Sam Thong and Long Cheng in a rush," said an official foreign observer. "It only worked halfway, and now they are regrouping for a massive, more conventional assault on Long Cheng." No one had much faith that the force of Meo tribesmen defending Long Cheng could hold out for long, and there were fresh reports last week that transport planes laid on by the CIA (box) had carried several hundred Thai soldiers in as reinforcements. (Thailand denied that it had any regulars in Laos, but officials conceded that "volunteers" might have joined the fray.) This transfusion, however, was no sure-fire cure. "Sending the Thais up there is not like having a Panzer division defend the place," said one U.S. military man. "The Thais spook as badly as the Laotians."

Unavailing Efforts: Diplomacy failed to ease the crisis. President Nixon sent a strong note to Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin asking Moscow to reconvene the 1962 Geneva Conference on Laos, of which it is co-chairman, in order to stop the fighting. But most observers gave that effort little chance for success. Another letter was sent by messenger from the Pathet Lao's titular leader, Prince Souphanouvong, to his half-brother, Laotian Premier Souvanna Phouma. The "peace offer," however, turned out to be nothing new, and Souvanna quickly shelved it.

If the outlook was disturbing in Laos, it was even more disheartening in Cam-

bodia. One of the principal aims of the new regime is to expel North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops from their sanctuaries along the border with South Vietnam. But the triumvirs in Phnom Penh—the Prime Minister, Lt. Gen. Lon Nol, Deputy Prime Minister Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak and Chief of State Chen Heng—wisely decided that their best chance for survival was to follow the neutralist path that Sihanouk trod so nimbly for many years. Accordingly, they asked the Soviet Union and Britain, the co-chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina, to do the job for them by restoring the International Control Commission that had been set up by the conference partly to police Cambodian neutrality (Sihanouk sent the commission packing in 1969 as an economy measure). The new leaders also tried to maintain working relations with Communist diplomats in the hope that the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops could be negotiated off Cambodian soil. And Lon Nol's government even held onto the Columbia Eagle, the hijacked American munitions ship, for fear that by releasing the vessel it might appear to favor the U.S.

But Lon Nol seemed to be having trouble balancing on the tightrope. It was unlikely that the Communists could be persuaded to lend a hand, for Hanoi, Moscow and Peking were all convinced that the new regime in Phnom Penh was leaning toward the West. For one thing, the government began to clamp down on the shipment of Communist military supplies through the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville—continuing a process be-

6 APR 1970

Mounting Uneasiness in Southeast Asia

AS a new regime sought to consolidate its hold on Cambodia last week, portraits of Prince Norodom Sihanouk were hurriedly removed in government offices and shops throughout the capital of Phnom-Penh. While the deposed chief of state was gone, however, it was clear that he was not forgotten. In a Phnom-Penh hotel, a visitor asked for one of the Sihanouk portraits as a souvenir. "Oh no," replied a clerk. "We are saving it. Nothing is sure. We may have to put it back up."

A mood of uneasiness and uncertainty prevailed in Cambodia and in neigh-



LON NOL IN PHNOM-PENH
New chapter in a turbulent history.

boring Laos as well. In Peking, Sihanouk called for a war of liberation against the "traitors and renegades" who had seized power in Phnom-Penh. From Hanoi came pledges of "total support" for Sihanouk, and North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong hurried to Peking to confer with the deposed prince. In Phnom-Penh, both the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong closed their embassies, a move short of outright diplomatic rupture but suggestive of trouble to come.

Late in the week it came. Pro-Sihanouk riots erupted north of Phnom-Penh, and two National Assembly deputies who had voted to depose Sihanouk were reportedly slashed to death. To keep the demonstrations from spreading to the capital, the government sent tanks to seal off roads leading to Phnom-Penh, closed Pochentong Airport and imposed a 6 p.m.-to-6 a.m. curfew. More ominously, Acting Head of

State Cheng Heng charged that Viet Cong forces on Cambodian soil "have begun actions against the Cambodian people and our soldiers" near the border, and Prince Sirik Matak warned that an attack by thousands of Communist troops "could not be ruled out." There were reports that several thousand Communist troops had entered the country to foment trouble, and the new government called up its reserves and asked all veterans to report for duty. Meanwhile, in Laos, rampaging Communist forces were less than 1½ miles away from the key CIA base at Long Cheng. A new chapter in the turbulent history of Indochina was unfolding, and few cared to predict whether it was the preface to a wider war.

Down to Size. Styling itself a "government of salvation," the regime of General Lon Nol, the Premier, and Prince Sirik Matak, the Deputy Premier, moved to persuade Cambodia of the rightness of its rule. In meetings with major national groups—leading Buddhist bonzes, district chiefs, students and members of Sihanouk's own political movement, the Sangkum—the new leaders explained their actions in detail and stressed the economic difficulties and moral corruption of recent years. Key Sihanouk backers were jailed.

Still, one Western diplomat suggested that if Sihanouk were to turn up at the airport tomorrow, "the guards, instead of arresting him, would probably prostrate themselves before him." To cut Sihanouk down to size, the government began waging an intensive propaganda campaign. The local press, which had previously referred to him as a god-prince, mocked him savagely and his half-Italian wife Princess Monique even more. Some newspapers ran composite photos of her head on anonymous nude bodies in obscene poses. The prince's popularity, however, remained a troublesome factor.

An Army Affair. An equally serious difficulty was the Communist Vietnamese military presence. Before Sihanouk's fall, Lon Nol called on the Communists to evacuate their Cambodian sanctuaries immediately. That demand was not emphasized publicly after the takeover. Nonetheless, Sirik Matak told TIME Correspondent Burton Pines in Phnom-Penh that getting rid of the Communist forces remained a primary goal. "We demand that they immediately leave our territory," the prince said. "Sihanouk violated his own—and our—proclaimed policy of neutralism by permitting the Vietnamese foreigners to stay inside Cambodia. We cannot tolerate it. We have every expectation that this matter can be solved peacefully. If not, it will become an affair for our army."

If last week's border clashes were to develop into an all-out war between Cambodia's 37,000-man army and the better-armed, better-organized Communist troops, a slaughter would probably ensue. Cambodia could call on the Americans and South Vietnamese, but that would almost certainly plunge the country—like Laos—inextricably into the agonizing morass of the Viet Nam War. "In no case would I envisage asking any of our neighbors—Thailand, Laos,



VIETNAMESE CIVILIAN LEAVES CAMBODIA
Fresh fears of a wider war.

South Viet Nam—for assistance," Sirik Matak told Pines. "To ask others to help us militarily would destroy the independence and neutrality that are the preconditions of our small nation's existence." U.S. jets strafed Communist positions in Cambodia. It was the fifth time this year that the U.S. has admitted to air raids over Cambodia.

Coup Rumors. In Laos, the question was how far the six battalions of North Vietnamese troops that were probing Laotian defenses around Long Cheng intended to go. Would they overrun the base and keep moving right to the plains just north of Vientiane? A major push seemed several days off at least, but U.S. advisers and government defenders prepared a fallback position at Ban Son, 20 miles south of the base. Meanwhile, U.S. warplanes continued to bomb Com-

continued

munist supply routes across northern Laos. Despite U.S. estimates that the air attacks have inflicted 20% casualties on Communist units, the bombing has failed to stem the tide of supplies.

Though a new Communist Pathet Lao peace plan was delivered to Prince Souvanna Phouma, the neutralist but Western-leaning Premier of Laos, he decided to defer a decision until the Cambodian situation settles down. In any case, the prospect that anything solid may emerge from the Pathet Lao plan is slight. As a precondition, the Communists insist that American planes halt their bombing in Laos. U.S. officials have indicated that the bombing will not stop, even at Souvanna's request. As Secretary of State William Rogers noted last week: "If North Viet Nam continues to use the Ho Chi Minh Trail as a principal supply route to South Viet Nam, obviously we would not be in a position to stop."

Souvanna may be encountering some difficulty himself, from the right as well as the left. Rumors of a possible right-wing coup were once again afloat in Vientiane. As for the left, Souvanna said that Hanoi hoped to capitalize on the coup in Cambodia by solidifying its hold on Laos while everybody's attention was directed elsewhere. "North Viet Nam," said Souvanna, "has a desire for hegemony in this area."

Tempting Target. That seems true enough. There is little doubt that Hanoi and Washington alike are deeply worried about what may happen next in the area. A broadening of the war could place enormous strains on Hanoi's resources, but the North Vietnamese may be tempted to strike if their sanctuaries are seriously endangered. The U.S., on the other hand, may be tempted to remove once and for all the border sanctuaries that have enabled Hanoi to prolong the war.

Unless the U.S. is willing to take the chance of widening the war, however, it might be wiser to settle for smaller gains. One possibility would be for the U.S. to discourage Cambodia from military action against the Communists, but to encourage the new regime to curtail their supplies. If Washington were to seek any more dramatic profit from the current turmoil, it might risk throwing away the hope of a long-term political settlement in exchange for a short-term military advantage.

M - 37,175

APR 6 1970

CONSPIRACY?

The history of the U.S. intervention in Vietnam is filled with unanswered questions, the biggest one being how we got into it in the first place.

Arthur Goldberg, Ambassador to the United Nations in the Johnson Administration, says that it was all a mistake, from the beginning on through. Not a conspiracy, he says, merely a mistake, a tragic one.

Maybe. Why, though, would he mention "conspiracy" in his remarks on a recent television "Meet The Press" show. Could it be that the events underway in Laos and Cambodia, raising as they do more mysterious questions, prompt thoughts coming under the heading of "conspiracy?"

There is a clear line extending back from at least 1950 — probably before — of U.S. intervention in the post-world-war-two situation in southeast Asia, in the area which used to be called French Indochina. (That former colonial territory now consists of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.)

In 1950, with the French embarked upon an effort to maintain a form of control over their pre-war possession, U. S. advisors arrived from Korea and the Philippines to teach guerrilla warfare to French officers. At about the same time there began a substantial program of U.S. military aid to the French.

Four years later the French had had it in Vietnam. But not so the U.S. Between 1954 and 1956 the United States military presence in Vietnam replaced the previous French presence. Little by little — the complete story remains to be told — the role of this presence changed from training mission to combat support to combat replacement, in the number of a half million troops.

The Nixon policy, as far as can be determined, is to attempt to reverse this process. To change the U.S. military role, that is, back to what it was nine or ten years ago. To "Vietnamize" the war.

Let us assume that there are those who believe this will work no better now than it did before — and that what is required is not the Nixon reversal, instead, of what he seems to be doing. How better to countermand the troop withdrawal order of the Nixon Administration than by creating what can be described as the necessity not for less U.S. forces but for more?

The present picture in Laos and Cambodia surely suggests a buildup toward this kind of emergency. Who is constructing the buildup? In charge in Laos, we know from recent news reports obtained with great difficulty, is the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, the CIA, a super secret service accountable for its funds and operations to no one but itself; as Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and possibly Johnson found out. The chances are strong that the hand of the CIA will be found to have been decisive in Cambodia in the right-wing military coup which deposed the Cambodian leader, Prince Sihanouk.

CHARLESTON, W. VA.
GAZETTE APR. 5 1970
M - 63,294
GAZETTE-MAIL
S - 106,775

Laotian Moves Damaging

The great danger of United States involvement in Laos — which the Nixon administration has gone to such pains to keep secret — is that it ultimately will get us entangled in another Vietnam-type war in Southeast Asia. And, certainly, we already have more than we can handle with the mess in Vietnam.

But there is another aspect that can be severely damaging to this country. That is our clandestine operations in which we apparently are carrying out our cloak-and-dagger maneuvers in Laos under cover of the Agency for International Development (AID).

The Associated Press reported a few days ago that American civilians based in Laos "perform what amounts to military functions under auspices of the U. S. Embassy, the Agency for International Development and two companies under charter to AID—Air America and Continental Air Services, Inc."

The best available information, said this report, is that as many as 100 CIA personnel are operating in Laos under cover of AID or the U.S. Embassy, while other CIA agents are said to operate "in the black," meaning they are not carried on either embassy or AID rolls.

Significantly, AID officials will neither confirm nor deny that their organization is a cover for CIA operations. This, it seems to us, comes close to being a confession that AID is prostituting itself by providing cover for our military meddling in that country.

This is a type of arrangement that must not be allowed to continue, for it will serve to destroy whatever good will this country may be able to build up around the world through the economic efforts of the Agency for International Development.

Indeed, a presidential task force appointed to make a comprehensive review of past U. S. aid programs and chart new directions for the 1970s specifically recommended on March 8 a complete separation of military and economic aid.

The 16-member panel, headed by former Bank of America President Rudolph A. Peterson, urged that all types of "security assistance" — including military assistance and sales — be combined in one legislative act, separate from economic aid, with the State Department exercising "firm policy guidance" over military programs.

The purpose of the AID program is to provide needed economic assistance in underdeveloped countries, and in the process win some friends for America, which it surely needs. We can be sure that neither objective will be achieved by misusing the Agency for International Development as an illegal cover for CIA activities. This can only serve to make all of our efforts, however humanitarian and sincere they may be, suspect in the eyes of the world.

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CLEVELAND, OHIO
PLAIN DEALER

M - 409,414
S - APR 05 1970

Blames Public Gullibility for Expansion of Vietnam War

✓ Now our federal government, pushed by the CIA and Pentagon, is expanding the Southeast Asian war into Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand, the American people should be reminded of the following:

When Richard Nixon was vice president, on April 17, 1954, he addressed newspaper editors at Washington in what was supposed to be an "off the record" talk. He tried to torpedo the Geneva Peace conference, then about to begin, by saying: "If, to avoid further Communist expansion in Asia and Indochina we must take the risk now by putting our boys in, I think the executive has to take the politically unpopular step to do it."

Word leaked out the following day of what Nixon had said. The story was published. Americans should note that this is the same man who, since entering the White House, has been assuring the people "all we are interested in is to see the Vietnamese get the right of self-determination."

That right was thwarted when the late John Foster Dulles led the drive that prevented the free elections in Vietnam specified at Geneva. The CIA and Pentagon applauded. Since then, a succession of federal administrations has convinced our people we had to go there and invade Asia or the Vietnamese, with no bombers or Navy, would come over and attack us. Some 50,000 of our men have died in combat or of tropical diseases because of our gullibility. Is this really what the "silent majority" wanted?

JACK CLOWSER

1516 Bidwell Avenue,
Rocky River

5 APR 1970

The Yankee 'King' of Laos

By DON SCHANCHE

THE 'STRONGEST FORCE' behind the headlines in the strange, secret war of the CIA-supported Meo guerillas in Laos is a 57-year-old retired Indiana farmer whose bizarre career as humanitarian, battle tactician and homespun philosopher combines the qualities of Albert Schweitzer, Lawrence of Arabia and Will Rogers.

He is Edgar (Pop) Buell, area coordinator for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Northeast Laos and key figure in the long struggle against the Communist Pathet Lao. The primitive Meo tribesmen think of him as a demi-god. His close friendship with their mysterious chieftain, Maj. Gen. Vang Pao, has often turned the course of the war and influenced American policy in that war-torn little country.

The aging Hoosier, a plain and homely man even by Grant Wood standards, has lived with the Meo in the mountains around the famed Plaine des Jarres since 1961. He has led them in victory, rallied them in defeat, founded their first schools and hospitals, performed emergency surgery, including 30 amputations, and taught them a crude but efficient "new" kind of 19th century agriculture.

"If I can get 'em from a thousand years behind the rest of the world to only 70 or 80 years behind," Buell said, "they're that much better off, ain't they?"

In his devotion to the welfare of the half million Meo and Lao refugees under his care, Buell frequently boils over with irritation at American bureaucrats and diplomats who resist his demands for short-cuts in speeding supplies to

the displaced people. His deep friendships not only with Gen. Vang Pao and other Meo leaders, but with Premier Souvanna Phouma and dozens of other Laotian leaders, including King Savang Vatthana himself, has made even high State Department officials reluctant to cross swords.

As I write this, Buell and his close friend, Vang Pao, a tough tribal leader who rules like an old-fashioned Chinese

war lord, are on the run. The Indianan fled under Communist fire just a few days ago from his refugee headquarters and supply base at Sam Thong, a provincial capital he founded seven years ago on a high mountain plateau 15 miles south of the Plaine des Jarres.

THE MEO GENERAL, who calls Buell "my father" and occasionally ignores his CIA advisers to follow the old farmer's advice, is fighting to save his own headquarters 19 miles away. It is an equally "new" town called Long Tieng and it has been swollen to the proportions of an American suburb by a vast infusion of equipment and men from the CIA, the U.S. Air Force and the Army of Thailand.

When I first visited Long Tieng eight years ago, it was an abandoned opium poppy field in a bowl-like declivity high in the mountains. When I saw the Meo stronghold last year, it was the second largest city in Laos, bigger than the royal capital of Luang Prabang and almost as large as the political capital, Vientiane.

Communist capture of these two mountain bases in the crazy-quilt little war will be a disaster comparable, on Laos' small scale, to what the American command in Vietnam would face if Danang and Saigon were to be seized by the Viet Cong.

Ironically, all Buell and Vang Pao ever sought was a period of peace in the mountains and an opportunity to integrate the backward Meo into the social fabric of Laos. What has happened in-

stead is that both have become tragically embroiled in a 10-year war in which American involvement has grown from a few bags of rice, given by Pop Buell to Meo war refugees in 1961, to a losing, last-ditch stand involving hundreds of American fighter bombers, more than a billion dollars worth of munitions, a hundred-odd U.S. Army unit advisers and dozens of CIA counter-insurgency experts.

When President Nixon minimizes American involvement in ground combat in Laos, he obviously hasn't been told about Pop Buell, just as he reportedly was not told about the death of Army Captain Joseph Bush in combat at Muong Soui, Laos, which I reported, to the consternation of the White House, a few weeks ago.

BUELL has led Meo troops in battle many times. On one occasion a few years ago, his presence alone was credited with holding together a pitifully weak defensive force at a place called Na Khang,

during a bloody, three-day enemy attack. Once, he personally trained and led a Meo commando demolition team that blew up 30 kilometers of the Communists' main supply highway from Hanoi to the Plaine des Jarres, stalling the enemy's war in Laos for a precious six months.

On another occasion, Buell advanced with a guerrilla patrol to the fenceline of the Pathet Lao's main headquarters in Sam Neua city, close to the North Vietnamese border. After helping to reconnoiter the stronghold, he caught pneumonia on the long trek back to his own base camp and almost died.

Twenty times in the last 10 years Buell has been forced to flee under fire into the darkened jungle to escape Communist attacks against villages in which he was sleeping, and each time he has led thousands of terrified refugees out with him. On one night alone, early in the war, he saved 8,000 Meo and Lao people from slaughter by leading them away from a pursuing enemy force. For these actions and his unstinting humanitarian work among Laotian and Meo war refugees, King Savang Vatthana of Laos awarded him the highest decoration a foreigner can receive, the Order of a Million Elephants. The Meo have given him divine status and call him "Tan Pop," which means "Mister Sent From Above."

Buell has had one near-fatal heart attack in the Laos mountains and suffers almost every month from recurring bouts of malaria. He has survived four mountain plane crashes and has been under fire almost daily for 10 years, yet he never has been wounded. Vang Pao, on the other hand, has been shot twice

and seriously injured several times in crashes of the small courier planes he and Edgar Buell use to hop around the mountains of northeast Laos.

Both are tireless workers. It is rare to find either putting in less than an 18-hour day. "I was always of the opinion that I ought to do a little bit extra after I did my day's work," said Buell. "It's that little bit that sells America to these people."

The fates of Laos and American interests in that country have been intertwined since the two small men (each is 5'4") first met in a native restaurant in the village of Lhat Houang, just south of the Plaine des Jarres in 1960. They sealed a personal pact that night which has often overshadowed the policies of both the Laotian government and the United States.

Buell then was a volunteer agricultural worker on a farm of \$65 a month from International Voluntary Services, a private peace corps which still works under contract to USAID.

Indochina: The Players Don't Seem Sure What To Do Next

WASHINGTON—That war just will not go away.

In the last week the North Vietnamese struck briefly, though by no means feebly, in a first spring spasm of offensive. The jousting in Laos continued inconclusively. The confusion in Cambodia left everyone wondering. The Paris talks droned on monotonously. The French offered a proposal, vaguely. And under the weight of it all, the uneasy truce on the home front collapsed.

"It simply does not matter very much for the United States, in cold, unadorned strategic terms, who rules the states of Indochina," said Senator J. William Fulbright in a scornful attack on the nation's policy in Southeast Asia.

And though no one answered him in public, the Administration's reply was self-evident: It does not matter very much who rules North Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia; but after all that has been invested, it still matters very much who rules South Vietnam.

The North Vietnamese have occupied eastern Laos to protect their supply route into South Vietnam. They are encamped in eastern Cambodia to keep Saigon and the Mekong Delta region under constant threat. They are advancing in western Laos to prove that they cannot be defeated even when they are stymied inside South Vietnam. They mount a periodic attack in South Vietnam to emphasize their menacing presence while the Americans try slowly to depart.

Laos Deadlock

The "neutral" Laotians resist as best they can, with the help of a C.I.A.-run army, some Thai troops and American air bombardments. The American appeals for diplomatic assistance go unheard in Moscow and Peking. The North Vietnamese

offer to exchange a peace in western Laos for a halt in the bombing of their supply routes in eastern Laos is rejected out of hand in Washington.

In jittery Cambodia, meanwhile, a new regime struggles to consolidate the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk and to avert civil strife with his followers. The Prince's successors reiterate his vows of neutrality, but they possess neither the military strength nor the diplomatic leverage to compel the North Vietnamese to leave their territory.

The South Vietnamese and some of their American military advisers are itching for an invitation to cross the border into Cambodia—not to defend that country's interests but to relieve the military pressure on themselves. Twice since the Cambodian coup they have arranged for such an invitation in private negotiations along the frontier. But Washington and Phnompenh are plainly frightened by such free-lance exercises in escalation and last week demanded that they be stopped, at least for the time being.

Dreams of dramatic change in the military balance in Southeast Asia persist in some American quarters. If the troop withdrawals could only be slow enough, if the Cambodian sanctuary could be harassed or destroyed, if the home front would hold firm economically and politically, if the President meant what he said, about not accepting "defeat," it.

But the prevailing Administration position, as outlined to a restive Senate Foreign Relations Committee by Secretary of State William P. Rogers, last week, seems to have been much more modest.

He said the United States had no intention of involving itself in Cambodia, either militarily or diplomatically. Though the new regime there enjoys Washington's tacit support, it is recognized as weak and essentially impotent against the North Vietnamese. If it can stay out of the Indochina war and still give less aid and comfort to Hanoi than in Prince Sihanouk's day, so much the better. If it gets into trouble and seeks American help, it will probably be refused.

Promise Repeated

Mr. Rogers also reiterated the promise not to enlarge the American involvement in Laos. Though its total conquest by North Vietnam would sadden Washington and frighten neighboring Thailand, it could not be defended by a war-weary nation yearning to get its forces off the Asian mainland.

Presumably, the Secretary of State also offered a cautious account of the Administration's belief that the tide of battle is turning against the Communists in South Vietnam. For reasons that no one can fully understand and to an extent that no one wishes to define, the "Vietnamization" and "pacification" programs are said to be progressing well, so that American troop withdrawals can probably be accelerated this year toward the goal of about 225,000 by mid-1971. The present troop level in Vietnam is 450,000.

Success in "Vietnamization" is also still held to be the only way of forcing Hanoi to negotiate for a peace settlement throughout Indochina. What appeared to be a proposal by France for another large international conference to arrange such a settlement found little interest in Washington. But the proposal was not rejected, partly because it was not understood and partly because it was not clear whether Hanoi had been sounded out before. But the prevailing view in the Administration is that the present Paris talks could come to life on a moment's notice if North Vietnam were ever interested in meeting the minimum American condition for a "self-determined"—and presumably non-Communist—regime in Saigon.

Vietnamization was seen in wholly different terms, however, by Senator Fulbright. It is better than escalation, he said, in a long speech that signaled the end of his patience and private truce with Mr. Rogers. "But I welcome it only in the sense that I would rather be

riding in a car heading for a precipice at 30 miles an hour than at 80 miles an hour. Granting the new policy all that is its due, I am still unwilling to adorn the lesser folly with the name of wisdom."

At best, the Senator argued, it is a policy to keep "our punchy protégés in Saigon staggering around the ring for a few years longer" so that the Administration can avoid the kind of political settlement that it has called "defeat and humiliation"—namely a coalition regime. But instead of deterring Communist advance in Asia, Mr. Fulbright added, the United States has now actually stimulated it. The nation's course, he insisted, amounted to "madness on so grand a scale."

That in itself was a major escalation of the rhetoric in Washington.

—MAX FRANKEL

5 APR 1970

Air America's Civilian Facade Gives It Latitude in East Asia

By RICHARD HALLORAN

WASHINGTON, April 4—As the American-supported clandestine army went on the attack in Laos again this week, pilots of a flamboyant airline called Air America took to the skies once again to move troops, provide supplies and evacuate wounded.

Air America is a flight charter company that, like the clandestine army, is widely considered to be the servant of the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

With its assorted fleet of 167 aircraft, Air America performs diverse missions across East Asia from Korea to Indonesia. It is believed to be a major link for the C.I.A.'s extensive activities throughout Asia.

Air America parachutes Meo tribesmen and other secret agents behind North Vietnamese lines in Laos, trains mechanics for the aviation division of the national police in Thailand, hauls American aid cargo for the Agency for International Development in South Vietnam, ferries United States Air Force men from Okinawa to Japan and South Korea, and dispatches intelligence flights from Taiwan along the coast of Communist China.

The company also transports helicopters from France and Italy for assembly in Southeast Asia, flies prospectors looking for copper and geologists searching for oil in Indonesia, and provides pilots for commercial airlines such as Air Vietnam and Thai Airways and for China Airlines, which is on Taiwan.

Air America's civilian facade permits the United States to do things that would otherwise be impossible or, at least, politically embarrassing. The 1962 Geneva accords, for instance, prohibit foreign military aircraft in Laos but they say nothing about civilian planes. The facade also averts public attention in countries such as Japan that are sensitive to the American military presence.

Then too, intelligence services the world over have always used the company as a cover. Air America gives the C.I.A. and

other Government agencies controlled and secure transport. On the economic side, commercial work enables the company to keep its large fleet busy when part might be idle.

The outfit exudes an air of Oriental adventure out of Milton Caniff's comic strip "Terry and the Pirates." It has the flamboyance of the late Lieut. Gen. Claire L. Chennault's wartime Flying Tigers, from which it is descended. Working for Air America demands the resourceful skill of the bush pilots who have explored the unknown beaches of northern Canada, the South American highlands and Africa.

Those who have seen Air America's pilots on the job in Asia say they have a sense of dedication and duty. They take more than routine risks and some have gone down in Asian jungles, not to be seen again.

Asian Art on the Walls

Most of the company's aircraft, like those of regular airlines, carry its name, though some are unmarked. The fleet includes long-haul jets, the C-46 and C-47 propeller craft that were the workhorses of World War II, a variety of helicopters and the latest in single-engine and twin-engine utility planes. Air America also borrows Air Force planes.

The line's headquarters in Washington looks much like the offices of other medium-size businesses—conservatively dressed executives, miniskirted secretaries, bits of Asian art on the walls, a reddish-orange carpet to lend a touch of cheer.

The chief executive of Air America is George A. Doole Jr., a low-key 60-year-old businessman who holds a master's degree from the School of Business Administration at Harvard. Before joining Air America in 1953 he was the chief pilot for Pan American and pioneered trans-Atlantic air routes before World War II.

In Asia the general manager is Hugh L. Grundy, 55, who is described by acquaintances as a quiet, shy man. He too is an alumnus of Pan American, having been an engineer with the line before the war and then having served in China. His headquarters is in Taipei, Taiwan.

The C.I.A. evidently has at least two channels into Air America—one through the hold-structure of Air America and its

affiliates, the other through charter arrangements under the guise of contracts with A.I.D. Gleanings from those contracts, which have been made available to The New York Times, show the extent of the operations.

The C.I.A. declines to comment on this subject, and A.I.D. officials refuse to discuss intelligence operations.

Mr. Doole, in an interview, brushed the matter aside. "If 'someone out there' is behind all this," he said, "we don't know about it."

Incorporated in Delaware

The parent company of Air America is the Pacific Corporation, which was incorporated in Delaware in 1950 with \$10,000. Mr. Doole said the shares were privately held, mostly by the five members of the board of directors. The corporation and its subsidiaries employ about 9,300 people.

The Pacific Corporation owns 100 per cent of Air America, which is also a Delaware corporation founded in 1950. The line owns 125 aircraft and leases 42 more. It employs about 4,700 people, some 400 of them pilots, and has bases in Okinawa, Taiwan, South Vietnam, Thailand and Laos.

Air America, in turn owns 99 per cent of Air Asia, which was set up on Taiwan in 1955. Air Asia claims the finest aircraft maintenance and repair facility in Asia, at Tainan.

In addition, the Pacific Corporation owns 40 per cent of Civil Air Transport, incorporated under Chinese Nationalist law on Taiwan. It was founded in 1946 by General Chennault, the United States air commander in China during World War II who died in 1958, and is manned by many of the pilots who flew with the Flying Tigers against Japan during the war.

Civil Air Transport, known as C.A.T., which originally functioned as a regular airline as well as carrying out clandestine missions, is also generally believed to have been operated and partly financed by United States intelligence agencies. Air America took over C.A.T. in 1950.

When the Chinese Nationalists wanted to establish a Chinese-run airline, C.A.T. had to get out of the passenger business. Most of its other operations have since been absorbed by Air America but it still flies some special missions.

There is also a separate operating division of Air America known as Pacific Engineering.

"We're all one family," Mr. Doole said. "You can't tell one from the other. We tie them together with contracts and don't even keep separate books except for tax purposes."

Air America and its affiliates appear to be self-sustaining operations in that they are paid by A.I.D. and commercial clients for their work. Because more than 50 per cent of it is done under Government contract, it is impossible to say whether the line makes a profit in the commercial sense. Moreover, its financial transactions and earnings are unavailable because the Pacific Corporation, being closely held, does not have to report them publicly.

The boards of directors of the companies are closely tied together. Most of the directors serve on several boards, which are made up of reputable businessmen chosen to give the entire complex respectability and a cover that looks genuine.

Samuel A. Walker, chairman of the Pacific Corporation, is a managing partner of Joseph Walker & Sons, a New York banking house. He is also a director of Air America.

Pilots Are Greatest Asset

The chairman of Air America and Air Asia is Adm. Felix B. Stump, who was commander in chief of United States forces in the Pacific from 1953 to 1959. Mr. Doole holds the titles of president of the Pacific Corporation and chief executive of Air America and Air Asia.

Robert G. Goelet, William A. Read and Arthur B. Richardson are directors of all three companies. Mr. Goelet has extensive holdings in New York real estate. Mr. Read is a retired member of the investment house of Dillon, Read & Co., and Mr. Richardson was formerly president of Chesbrough-Pond's.

Air America's greatest assets are its pilots, mostly Americans but including some Chinese and Thais.

"We hire the same pilots that Pan American and United hire," Mr. Doole said, "except that ours are a bit more experienced."

He shied from the term "bush

continued

CIA's troops in Laos loot recaptured base

STATINTL

Daily World Foreign Department

When "Royal Lao" forces and U.S. CIA mercenaries recaptured the northern Laos base of Sam Thong earlier this week, they looted it to such an extent that U.S. newsmen described it yesterday as "a shambles." U.S. officials said that "local employees" attempting to stop the looting were forced away at gun-point by the troops.

Sam Thong, 75 miles north of the Lao capital of Vientiane, is a major CIA base for the clandestine army of General Vang Pao, a 15,000-man force made up of Meo tribesmen and led by U.S. and Thai "advisors."

U.S. planes had bombed Sam Thong day and night and the CIA had airlifted battalions of Thai mercenaries to retake the base.

Edgar M. "Pop" Buell, the U.S. agent who allegedly runs "refugee operations" at Sam Thong, was described yesterday by U.S. newsmen as "so mad he couldn't talk. There were almost tears in his eyes." The mercenaries removed cots, furniture and mattresses from the U.S. hospital and "walked off with anything portable," according to UPI correspondent, Kaylor.

The mercenaries, who receive \$6 a month as Thai soldiers, were reportedly offered \$250 apiece by the CIA to defend the "free world" at Sam Thong.

Rene Andrie, editor-in-chief of "L'Humanite," the French Communist Party newspaper, wrote yesterday that the pro-U.S. military coup in Cambodia on March 18 "forms one link in a chain of CIA activities."

In the West German weekly magazine, "Stern," the political analyst, Sebastian Haffner wrote today: "The coup in Cambodia was staged by the U.S. CIA. The slogans and methods by means of which the government of Prince Norodom Sihanouk was overthrown in Cambodia coincide in every detail with the notorious CIA style."

In Cambodia, the new military regime proclaimed today that "calm has now been restored." It said that tourists and foreign visitors are again welcome.

There was no immediate response from Saigon, whose troops had made a heavy armored visit in Cambodia last week.

At least 119 Cambodians were known to have been slain by Cambodian army troops and police during pro-Sihanouk demonstrations in the last two weeks. The new regime of General Lon Nol has issued a demand that all the country's provinces pledge allegiance to the new government but fewer than half have done so.

Thieu Plus Two

by The Editors

Partly in consequence of CIA skulduggery, the war in Southeast Asia has expanded. It is no longer a Vietnamese conflict with American intervention, and side effects in adjoining areas. As in 1953, Laos and Cambodia again are directly involved, and China may be. In a sense, both Indo-China and Mr. Nixon have come full circle in 17 years. In 1953, the French were becoming hopelessly trapped in a costly, unwinnable colonial war. The way out that was suggested, by no less than the French prime minister, Joseph Laniel, was settlement through international negotiation, with China as one of the negotiators. Vice President Richard Nixon was sternly opposed, and on November 4, 1953 he brashly lectured the French (who were the ones fighting and dying in Indo-China): "It is impossible to lay down arms until victory is completely won." The finger of duty and destiny pointed to the expulsion of Communists from Southeast Asia. The French, however, were fast losing interest in any such enterprise, with or without American assistance. Vice President Nixon nevertheless kept repeating that the United States could settle for nothing less than "victory," could not afford "another retreat" in Asia. In his view, the US had "lost" China to the Communists four years earlier and now was threatened with the "loss" of Indo-China as well. The tide must be stemmed. If the French could not carry on alone, American troops ought to get into the fight. Or so it seemed to Nixon in 1953, at a time when we had just begun to extricate ourselves from a war in Korea that had cost 33,629 American battle deaths.

In the upshot, there was an international conference about Indo-China, and China did participate in the Geneva agreement. But that the US did not, at that stage, become directly engaged militarily in Southeast Asia is not something Mr. Nixon can claim credit for. On the contrary, he did his utmost to push events the other way. He was overruled by President Eisenhower, advised by the Army Chief of Staff, General Matthew B. Ridgway. Ridgway investigated what American intervention would mean, concluded it would entail far greater American losses than had been incurred in Korea and said so to the National Security Council. That encouraged Eisenhower to trust his hunch against going to war in Indo-China, a hunch that became conviction when the French stronghold at Dienbienphu fell on May 7, 1954. Last week the government of France appealed for a

The pendulum of war swings wider in Laos

by HUGH D.S. GREENWAY

A Time-Life correspondent covering the war in Southeast Asia since March 1967, Greenway has spent many months of his time in Laos.

STATINTL

VIENTIANE Sam Thong has fallen. The North Vietnamese are in the town. The American bungalows around the airstrip, until just a few days ago the headquarters for U.S. aid and refugee relief, are now only burned-out ruins. Long Cheng, which holds the secret CIA base, the headquarters of General Vang Pao's clandestine army and the center for the entire American-Laotian effort in northern Laos, may soon be next.

The Americans at Sam Thong have been evacuated to the south. Thousands of civilians—Meo tribesmen, wearing elaborate wrought-silver necklaces and carrying their handmade flintlock muskets—are trudging south with all their belongings on their backs. The silver airplanes of Air America, the CIA contract airline, are flying in low over the jungle-covered hills and limestone outcroppings, so ironically reminiscent of placid classical Chinese landscape paintings, to drop 100-pound bags of rice to feed the fleeing Meos.

The annual North Vietnamese dry-season offensive is in its seventh week and already the troops from the northeast have penetrated deeper than in previous years, bloodying the nose of the dispirited Royal Laotian army and dealing the government's morale and prestige a heavy blow.

For years the Laotian war ran on in the wings of the larger Vietnam theater, with neither side pushing the other too hard. In the last two years the pendulum of war in Laos has been swinging harder and wider, and each wet-season dry-season offensive has mounted a little higher than before. There are two months of dry season left. The fear now in both Washington and Vientiane is that, this time, the North Vietnamese might be tempted to push on into the Mekong River valley—which would upset the balance of power in Indochina. If they did, it might put the Nixon Doctrine of limited involvement in Asia to its severest test.

There are several reasons why the U.S. presence in Laos has been kept secret. Like the North Vietnamese presence, it is a violation

of the Geneva accords. And, U.S. officials argue privately, a clandestine operation doesn't risk prestige in case of setbacks, and is thus less likely to commit the U.S. to Vietnam-scale involvement. Aside from the fact that most Americans find the idea of a secret war abhorrent, the lack of reliable information has led to gross exaggeration of the U.S. role in Laos. President Nixon's recent speech was meant to take the wind out of some of the exaggerations, but unfortunately the President was less than totally candid. While he admitted the bombing of Laos, he did *not* mention the CIA operation or the full role of the American advisers in the Laotian war. The President's estimate of North Vietnamese troop strength in Laos was at least 17,000 higher than the highest reliable estimate in Vientiane, including the estimates of the Americans themselves. His denial that there have been any American combat deaths in Laos was quickly proven false as well.

Laos is an improbable place for the U.S.—or anybody, for that matter—to become involved. Except for a brief moment of glory in the 14th Century, when Lan Xang (the Kingdom of the Million Elephants) held sway over what is now Laos as well as parts of Thailand and Cambodia, Laos has been a prisoner of geography, fought over and plundered repeatedly by its more powerful neighbors. The country as now constituted dates only from 1946 when the French assembled three kingdoms under their control and called it the Kingdom of Laos. Today there are fewer than three million people in the entire country, two million of them in government-controlled areas near the Mekong.

Perhaps losing so often and being subjugated by so many masters does something to a race, for the Lao answer has been to drop out. They are among the most charming people in Asia—and the most otherworldly and least martial as well. Consequently, Lao troops have sometimes fired over the heads of the enemy rather than hurt a people who have been the victims of American advisers. Most of the effective

PARTIAL TEXT OF FULBRIGHT SPEECH

'Myth of International Communist

This is a partial text of Sen. Fulbright's speech in the Senate yesterday on the Nixon administration's policies in Southeast Asia:

Several years ago I made a speech on the subject of "old myths and new realities." I recently re-read it and was surprised at how tame it seemed in retrospect. Some of the "new realities" of 1964 still seem pertinent, but others have ripened into clichés, while a few, which once had validity, have passed into the realm of old mythology. . . .

Today, for a start, I should like to discuss some of the misconceptions which seem to obtain in our policy in Southeast Asia. . . .

The old myth of international politics — that it was the private preserve of sovereigns and their ministers and none of the people's business — has given way to a new myth: that politics is life and everything political is highly consequential — not just for those who make their living by politics but for everybody, everywhere. Every issue is now a "critical" issue; every threat a "grave" one; and I doubt if there is a square inch left on the face of the earth that someone does not regard as strategic. . . .

The master myth of Vietnam is the greatly inflated importance which has been attached to it. From the standpoint of American security and interests, the central fact about Indochina is that it does not matter very much who rules in those small and backward lands. . . . What it all comes down to is that, if all other things were equal — as indeed they are not — it might be a convenience to the United States to have the countries of Indochina ruled by non-Communist leaders. For this hypothetical advantage we have already spent over 40,000 lives and \$100 billion.

How have we come to inflate so colossally the importance of Indochina to our own security? The answer lies in that hoariest, hardest, most indestructi-

ble myth of them all: the myth of the international Communist conspiracy. . . .

Just like the walking catfish, which gets out of a pond when the water becomes uninhabitable and heads overland for more hospitable waters, the conspiracy myth is both mobile and indestructible. Discredited in one locale, it soon turns up in another, sustained here and there by a kernel of truth, not enough to validate the myth but more than enough to secure its grip on the minds of leaders whose education in communism began — and ended — with Stalin. . . .

We are fighting a double shadow in Indochina — the shadow of the international Communist conspiracy and the shadow of the old, obsolete, mindless game of power politics. Armed with weapons that have given war a new dimension of horror, and adorned with the sham morality of ideological conflict, the struggle for power and influence has taken on a deadly, new intensity at exactly the time when it has lost much of the meaning it once had. . . .

The second myth, well-established after five years of futile warfare, is that we could do anything about it if it did matter — anything worth doing, that is. . . .

Puny as it is by great power standards, North Vietnam is the paramount power in Indochina. In unadorned strategic terms, it is "their" part of the world in exactly the same way — except on a much more modest scale — that Eastern Europe is Russia's part of the world and Latin America is ours. . . .

We ought in a way to welcome North Vietnam's preeminence in Indochina, because, while North Vietnam has shown itself strong enough to dominate Indochina if left alone by outside powers, it has also shown itself willing and able to resist Chinese domination. At the same time North Vietnam is far too small a power to have any serious hope of conquering all of

Southeast Asia, much less posing any kind of threat to the United States. . . .

It should not be necessary to add — although I suppose it is — that I do not advocate a Communist-dominated Indochina. I merely propose to accept it, if it arises from the local power situation, as something unwelcome but tolerable, and most emphatically not worth the extravagant costs of a war like the one we are now fighting. . . .

Vietnamization represents a change in tactics from the Johnson policy but not a change in the objective, which is to preserve some kind of American military foothold, either directly or by proxy, in an alien sphere of influence. . . .

I welcome the change: Vietnamization is better than escalation, but I welcome it only in the sense that I would rather be riding in a car heading for a precipice at thirty miles an hour than at eighty miles an hour. If I really had my choice, I wouldn't be in that car at all. . . . Like the escalation which preceded it, Vietnamization is still an unsound policy, aimed at an unnecessary and probably unattainable objective. . . .

The President still has time to prevent an American defeat but not a lot of time. For all the fancy sophistries that have been concocted about it, Vietnamization is not strengthening our hand; like any reduction in military forces, it is weakening our hand, and our enemies are not such mental defectives that they can be kidded into believing otherwise. . . .

By mid-1971, when American forces are scheduled to be down to about 225,000 men, it may well be too late.

The myth of Vietnamization is thrown into sharp relief by the deterioration of the anti-Communist military position in Laos and the coup in Cambodia. These events point up the futility of our Vietnamese strategy in a conflict which is not confined to Vietnam but in fact encompasses all of Indochina. . . .

Conspiracy

Stymied though not defeated in Vietnam, the North Vietnamese have found in the power vacuum of Laos an opportunity to turn our flank. In the strategic vocabulary of a decade ago, they may have come up with a variation on the "domino" theory: something that might be called the "skip-a-domino" theory. With the Vietnamese domino momentarily glued down, the Communists may simply have decided to go on to the next one, where Souvanna Phouma's army of Meo tribesmen is hardly a match for the North Vietnamese, even with the support of an indeterminate number of CIA soldiers, an unrevealed number of imported Thais, and an apparently great number of B52's to pound the Communist supply lines. ✓

I doubt that it is the intention of the North Vietnamese to sweep through Laos and then have a go at the next "domino," which would be Thailand. I think it more likely that they are pressing their advantage in Laos to compensate for the stalemate in Vietnam and to demonstrate the futility of Vietnamization. . . . Events in Laos are showing up Vietnamization for a kind of political Maginot Line — difficult to assault head on, but why bother when you can walk around it?

. . . The startling aspect of the situation in Laos is our virtual helplessness. Caught in a dilemma between its instinct, for fighting communism wherever it appears and the restraints imposed by public and congressional opinion, the administration is reduced to hoping for the best in Laos. . . .

In Cambodia as in Laos the initiative lies with the Communists. . . .

It is not my purpose to taunt.

CANONSBURG, PA.
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Cambodia's Importance

The recent revolution in Cambodia and the fighting in Laos are of great importance to the war in Vietnam. Cambodia's new government might possibly close down the port of Sihanoukville to the communists, through which about one-third of the supplies to enemy in Vietnam are thought to pass. (It is Cambodia's only deep water harbor.)

Washington is waiting hopefully for that closure and this is probably why the U.S. Navy was refused permission to board the ammunition ship Columbia Eagle, with its load of U.S. bombs, recently, after the Navy had already issued the orders and the cruiser Oklahoma City was about to enter Sihanoukville harbor.

The fighting in Laos is of grave importance because if the communists take the entire country Thailand will be directly threatened. The United States is committed to Thailand's defense: that is why U.S. planes have been ferrying Thai troops to Laos and the C.I.A. has been doing all it can working with Laotian tribesmen.

What is really happening in this part of the world is a change of scene. The war in South Vietnam is declining in violence and the climax in Laos and Cambodia is approaching. The showdown had to come, for South Vietnam's security is affected by events in both countries. (All three formerly comprised French Indochina.)

Nixon Administration, though hogtied as far as the use of U.S. troops is concerned, perhaps rightly so, by Congress and public opinion, is doing its best to wage an effective war against the communists in Laos (and to some extent in Cambodia) with only the Air Force and the C.I.A. Undercover work in Cambodia seems to have paid off recently and Thai troops are fighting in Laos, with U.S. logistical and intelligence support.

Most experts agree the situation in South Vietnam is vastly improved. If Cambodia is made secure and at least the western half of Laos (bordering Thailand) is safeguarded or secured, without the use of U.S. troops, much will have been accomplished by the Nixon Administration.

CIA 'Air Force'

NEW YORK — The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency has both its own private army in Laos and an "Air Force." Newsweek reports that Air America, one of the largest U.S. companies, is an arm of the CIA. It is nominally owned by a private concern, Pacific Corporation, which is only a front for the CIA operation. The force now has about 150 transport planes and employs about 600 pilots, many veterans of the Vietnamese war. ✓

The planes are used to carry prisoners of war, move troops, reinforcements, ammunition and supplies. ✓

Letters to the Editor

The War in Laos

SIR: It was with great interest that I read your editorial, "The Laotian War." For over a year Associated Press reporter Tammy Arbuckle has presented in-depth articles concerning Laos. He has done an outstanding and accurate job.

If any of the Senators and commentators now crying out has bothered to read The Star, they would realize that the press and the American public have not been misinformed or kept in the dark about the "undeclared war" in Laos. Thank you for presenting an objective picture of the developments in this Southeast Asian country.

J. V. Martin.

SIR: Any intelligent, thoughtful person who will take the time to read the full text of President Nixon's statement on Laos must wonder why certain so-called "liberal" Senators, who are screaming about the alleged involvement of the United States in Laos, do not scream about the 67,000 North Vietnamese troops who have invaded and are occupying that unfortunate country in flagrant violation of the Geneva agreements to which North Vietnam is a party.

Are these Senators straining to do everything possible to embarrass and discredit the United States and to give aid and comfort to the enemy? If so, why?

Walter Wyatt.

SIR: Hopefully your policies, editorial and news, concerning the recent excitement over our defensive activity in Laos will recognize your readers' basic intelligence and desire for quality journalism. In this regard it would be comforting and helpful to read why the Communists are actually invading, how many treaties they have disregarded in this case and why, the degree of Russian aid and direction and what encouragement Hanoi might receive and expect from inaccurate reporting and misleading conclusions?

Barbara Estridge.

Editor's Note: Mr. Wyatt (letter above) answers Miss Estridge's question concerning broken treaties. We can only assume that the Communists are invading to impose a Communist government on Laos by force.

SIR: The comments on Laos attributed to Senator Stephen Young of Ohio, if true, are deplorable and certainly indicative of a few elected officials who make use of their office to create ill will between the United States and one of its allies. Referring to Laos as "... the most undeveloped nation in the world and not worth the life of one American" only does a great disservice to the United States and the people and government of Laos.

To my knowledge Senator Young has never visited Laos; therefore I question his qualification to speak on the subject from the floor of the Senate in an obvious attempt to influence national policy. While Senator Young professes his personal interest in "writing-off" Laos, nine nations, including the United States, are actively engaged in providing support of development projects in Laos that will favorably affect most of that area of Southeast Asia.

Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Thailand and the United States have invested \$30 million in construction of the Nam Ngum Dam just north of Vientiane. An additional \$1 billion is being considered for construction of the Pa Mong Dam. Both are part of the Mekong River development program. Surely this is acceptable evidence of world interest in assisting Laos to develop a natural resource beneficial to a large population of Southeast Asia.

With the exception of Vietnam, there are more American civilians assigned to the mission in Laos than anywhere else in the world. Most are engaged in providing development assistance, not CIA-agent activities as alleged by the Senator. The possibility of loss of life is always present while working in an area of active insurgency. People are killed every day right here in the District of Columbia.

The Pathet Lao and Hanoi will make excellent use of the Senator's comments in their travels through the villages and in their press releases and radio broadcasts.

Reader.

SIR: Our treatment of Laos has been a mixture of chicanery and poltroonery ever since President Kennedy decided our position in that country was "untenable" (April 1961). We had advised and persuaded Laos in 1954-55 to come under the umbrella of SEATO. The Laotian representatives then said: "We are a small weak people and all the Communists have to do to get in our country is walk across an imaginary line. You are the most powerful nation in the world, but you are 10,000 miles away." We assured them that they would be protected but that they would have to eschew Communism and throw the Pathet Lao out of their government.

Kennedy, after deciding that our position in Laos was untenable, agreed to the urging of the UN, and particularly the Communist powers therein, that there should be a "troika" government in that country. "Troika," as many know, is a Russian word meaning a 3-horse team. In the case of Laos it was meant to stand for the re-entry in the government of the Communists along with the other two parties already represented. In other words, he agreed that the Laotians should take back the very Communist Pathet Lao we had required that they put out. When the representatives of Laos in a meeting with ours at Bangkok were faced with this demand, they asked how we squared our demand with our position in 1965. The answer was to the effect that they were dealing with the Eisenhower administration in 1965 and that it was the Kennedy administration.

We put the Laotians on the spot and we are obligated to protect them from Communists, specifically North Vietnam. Our honor is at stake—as it is in South Vietnam. There is only one possible just way out of the problem and that is to win the war in Vietnam and Laos. It could have been won long ago, and it will have to be won now or in the future if our word and our future means anything at all. We cannot sidestep the real issue forever. And, it can be won very quickly by invading North Vietnam and destroying Haiphong.

Clarkson J. Beall.

Fulton, Md.

SIR: I would like to ask one question. How can anyone accuse the Nixon administration of having secretly, or otherwise, involved the United States on such a large scale in Laos in a mere 14 months? We all know that we have been committed in that country for many years, not only to aid the people of Laos but to support our troops in Vietnam.

S. Baghdasarian.

1 APR 1970

U.S. downs plane over North Vietnam

Daily World Foreign Department

A U.S. Navy jet shot down a MIG-21 interceptor on Saturday over the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the U.S. command in Saigon revealed yesterday. It was the first DRV plane downed since the "bomb-halt" announced by ex-President Lyndon Johnson on Nov. 1, 1968, and represents one of the most serious attempts at escalating the Vietnam war since that date.

A Radio Hanoi broadcast on Tuesday stated that DRV anti-aircraft gunners shot down a U.S. RF-4C photo-reconnaissance over DRV air space on Monday. The RF-4C is the spy version of the "Phantom" jet fighter-bomber.

The U.S. spokesman said the U.S. Navy "Phantom" jet was escorting reconnaissance planes when it shot down the MIG-21. The action was said to have occurred over Thanh Hoa, 120 miles north of the Demilitarized Zone.

It was admitted there were no reports that the MIG-21 had fired on the U.S. planes, and reporters quickly asked how the U.S. knew the MIG-21 was "attacking."

Students in Saigon on a protest strike against the March 27 jailing of 40 fellow-students grew to 33,000 yesterday. The lead in the strike was taken by the 6,000 students of Saigon's Medical Insti-

tute, who were then followed by university students in Hue, Dalat and Can Tho. The strike leaders sent a letter to Saigon President Nguyen Van Thieu declaring, "Our struggle is not an isolated one. We are supported by many other strata in the population." They warned Thieu that they would call for a general strike.

In Laos, General Vang Pao, head of the U.S. CIA's clandestine army of Meo tribesmen, claimed yesterday in a radio broadcast his troops had retaken Sam Thong, 80 miles north of the capital of Vientiane.

Sam Thong, an important CIA air base and supply depot in northern Laos, had been taken March 18 by the Lao Patriotic Front.

U.S. sources in Vientiane said the U.S. had made round-the-clock air strikes on Sam Thong ever

since it was captured by the LPF. They believed LPF troops were only pulling back to higher ground.

The Lao parliament in Vientiane urged Prince Souvanna Phouma, the premier, to open negotiations with the LPF on the basis of the LPF five-point peace plan. It added, however, that the peace negotiations must begin "without conditions." The LPF had demanded as a preliminary condition that the U.S. halt its bombing.

U N development

At the United Nations in New York, Secretary-General U Thant, after a meeting with Cambodian charge d'affaires, Or Kosalak, promised to "take a look into the matter" of Cambodia. The new military regime in Cambodia has charged that DRV and "Vietcong" troops are violating its soil.

Approved For Release 2001/03/04 : CIA-RDP80-01601R000700040001-3

LAOS WAR

How It Got That Way --Diplomatic Snafus

By John P. Wallach
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — American involvement in Laos began inconspicuously in the spring of 1946 in a remote province of Thailand.

An American office of Strategic Services veteran named James Thompson called on the Governor of Thailand's Nong Khai province. "Come upstairs," the governor said, "I have a Lao prince you might like to meet."

The governor's guest was Prince Souphanouvong, then a leader of the newly-formed Laotian independence movement and now head of the Communist Pathet Lao. Souphanouvong asked Thompson for pledges of U.S. support against the French colonialists who were re-establishing their control over Laos after the Japanese surrender.

The same spring, another meeting took place in Paris — between Ho Chi Minh, who had just begun his anti-French resistance movement (Viet Minh) in neighboring Vietnam, and America officials.

President Harry Truman refused to commit money or arms to the fight against the French, and six months later, in the winter of 1946, the bitter Indochina war began. It ended eight years later, after the siege of Dien Bien Phu, the French stronghold in North Vietnam, by Ho Chi Minh's forces who had turned to Russia and Communist China for help.

Partition

By that time, Viet Minh troops had invaded Laos, and joined Souphanouvong's Pathet Lao, and a Chinese force

moved in from neighboring Yunan province.

With the deterioration of the French position, the Western powers convened in April, 1954, an international conference in Geneva, also attended by North Vietnam and Communist China, to negotiate an armistice in Indochina.

The Geneva accords partitioned Vietnam, barred Laos and Cambodia from military alliances, prohibited foreign bases on their soil, called for the removal of all Viet Minh and French troops from Laos and called for the withdrawal of the Pathet Lao to the two Northern Laotian provinces.

The Geneva accords provided for the Laotian government to administer these provinces in collaboration with the Pathet Lao. Less than a year after the accords were signed, fighting broke out between Communists and government troops in the Communist-held provinces.

Some Laotian leaders, among them Souvanna Phouma, the half-brother of Souphanouvong, had urged the Geneva parties to set up a coalition instead of dividing the country in two.

Dulles Stand

By this time, however, President Eisenhower's Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, had decided to back an anti-communist government in Vientiane, the Laotian capital, and Souvanna Phouma, later to take over

this government, was eclipsed.

From that point, the U.S. presence in Laos grew.

In 1955, North Vietnam began to infiltrate large numbers of troops to their Pathet Lao allies, and the U.S. began training the royal Laotian army. A year later, Prince Souvanna Phouma took over the government.

In a matter of months, he was able to get his brother to agree to a ceasefire, the reintegration of the Communist provinces, and to a coalition government. The U.S. continued to support Souvanna Phouma.

The Central Intelligence Agency is thought to have surfaced for the first time in December, 1959, by persuading Gen. Phoumi Nosavan, a right-wing nationalist, to stage a coup against then prime minister Phoumi Sananikone.

But the UN, in the name of restoring the Geneva accords, stepped in, and plans were made for general elections in which Pathet Lao candidates could run. All 59 seats in the National Assembly were won by supporters of Gen. Phoumi.

Once again, charges of CIA interference surfaced. A month after the elections, Prince Souphanouvong escaped from prison and returned north. The new government lasted eight months. An unknown paratrooper captain named Kong Le led a coup d'etat and returned Souvanna Phouma to power.

Meanwhile, Gen. Phoumi established rival headquarters, where he reportedly again turned to the CIA for support. Finally, in December, 1960, Phoumi led his forces against Vientiane, and drove Souvanna Phouma up to the Plain of Jars to join his communist half-brother.

Wrong War

While the U.S. was pressing to reconvene the Geneva conference, Hanoi infiltrated troops into the north. A general concurrence that Laos was the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time led to the 1962 Geneva Conference, at which 14 nations agreed to guarantee Laotian neutrality.

STATINTL

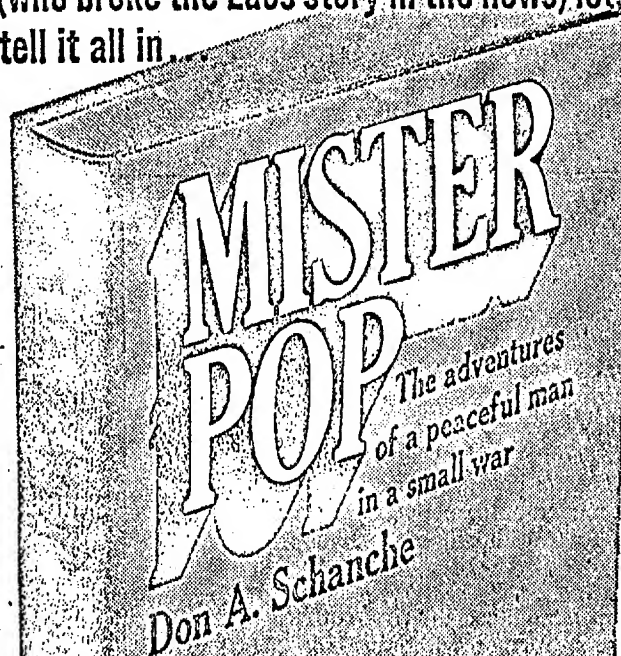
WILL LAOS BE ANOTHER VIETNAM?

For the inside story of
American involvement in Laos
read **MISTER POP**.



Edgar "Pop" Buell

Edgar Buell, whom the Meo tribesmen call "Mister Pop," has been in Laos for the past nine years, and he's still there. The first-hand story he has to tell about the C.I.A.'s role in Laos is an eye opener. Don Schanche (who broke the Laos story in the news) lets Pop Buell tell it all in...



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STATINTL

OUR INVOLVEMENT IN LAOS

By Robert Shaplen

THE debate over Laos, almost as intense if not as bitter as the Vietnam debate, has done more than clarify the nature of the American involvement in that patchwork kingdom which has played a secondary but significant role in the Vietnam war while also engaging in its own struggle to survive as a unitary nation. The Senate's dual actions in prohibiting the use of ground combat troops in both Laos and Thailand, and in curbing the right of the President to make a "national commitment" to any country without prior Congressional approval, have temporarily satisfied the common determination to avoid "another Vietnam." But the fundamental problem of how American policy should be made and conducted in Southeast Asia has only begun to be reexamined.

The broad outlines of our future policy in Asia were given by President Nixon during his Asian trip last year, most fully at his preliminary stopover in Guam, but much remains hazy about the nature of our current commitments and responsibilities there. The President and other administration officials in speeches and press conferences since then have reemphasized that, in line with reducing "our involvement and our presence" around the world, as Mr. Nixon put it in his State of the Union Message, the nations of Southeast Asia will henceforth have to bear the main burden of defending themselves against all but the most flagrant—including nuclear—forms of aggression. Still unclear and requiring further reappraisal are such substantive matters as the prerogatives of the Executive and the Departments of State and Defense to make agreements or pledges short of treaties with foreign countries without "the advice and consent" of the Senate.

What must be gone into thoroughly, moreover, are such complicated and specific questions as the advisability and legitimacy of using certain methods, especially clandestine ones, to achieve limited purposes. This includes the question of what sort of assistance the Central Intelligence Agency or any other intelligence branch of the government can or should give to nations engaged in counterinsurgency campaigns or wars within or even beyond their borders. Also involved is the peaceful role that the

SUN

M - 180,656

E - 209,655

S - 347,939

MAR 3 1 1970

Why Defend Laos?

By STEPHEN AMBROSE

LAOS is a country of less than three million people, most of whom either smuggle gold or grow and process opium for a living. It is one of the most isolated regions of the world. To get from one place to another in Laos is almost impossible. By itself, Laos has absolutely no importance to anyone except the Laotians.

Yet Laos now stands next to the Middle East and Vietnam as the most dangerous tinderbox in the world. So important has it become that the United States has actually decreased its air offensive in Vietnam in order to carry on combat operations in Laos. The CIA runs a private army in Laos (typically, a rather ineffective one). American soldiers have been killed on the ground, and the Pentagon is undoubtedly preparing contingency plans for the introduction of major combat units.

Why all this activity?

Supposedly because of the strategic importance of Laos. The Ho Chi Minh Trail provides infiltration routes for the introduction of NVA troops into South Vietnam, which justifies American involvement in Laos. Or does it?

Secretary of Defense Laird said in a press conference on March 19 that even if the Communists took over the government of Laos and then demanded that we halt the bombing, the Pentagon intended to continue the air offensive. Since the Ho Chi Minh Trail is little more than a jungle path, and since it is impossible to move large forces into the area, much less support them once there, it is perfectly obvious that we have no intention of stopping the infiltration by occupying southeastern Laos. We will simply continue to chase the will-o'-the-wisp of attempting to stop the infiltration by dropping big bombs from B-52s on the jungle and 400 strikes a day, currently.

In other words, who rules in Vientiane makes no difference

at all. The war in South Vietnam will not be affected by anything that happens in Laos; the bombings will go on even if the Communists occupy all Laos and take over the government.

Why, then, do we waste military effort by supporting the Laotians with the CIA and air missions around the Plaine des Jarres, which is hundreds of miles away from the Trail? Why is Nixon faced with the agonizing decision on introducing ground combat elements? Primarily, one fears, not because of any inherently important strategic reasons, but rather as a result of a long-term, insidious process of rhetorical escalation. "We go ahead treating this little pissant country as if it were Russia and China put together," Senator Fulbright once complained with respect to North Vietnam. Dean Rusk compared that tiny country to Nazi Germany ad nauseam, and the former Secretary of State used to talk of the importance of maintaining the sovereignty and freedom of Laos as if he were defending Canada or Mexico from foreign invasion.

All this nonsense about sovereignty and freedom loving peoples has gotten us into deep troubles in the past. It threatens to do so in the future. The important facts about Laos are that it does not matter to any outsider who rules there, and that it borders on China. In 1950 we learned, or at least one hopes that we learned, that the Chinese react with a certain hostility when American G.I.'s approach their border. Surely no one, not even in the Pentagon, wants a ground war with the Chinese over anything, much less Laos. Before we blunder on in defense of Laotian sovereignty and get ourselves into a war with China, it is imperative that the administration take a long, hard, realistic look at what it proposes to defend, at what risk, and for what purpose.

tions on September 25, 1961. He warned that South Vietnam was under attack by forces infiltrated through Laos. Furthermore, on November 6, 1961, we publicly confirmed reports from Laos that Soviet transport planes were delivering military supplies to the southern Lao air base of Telephone which had been in Pathet Lao hands for months, after being captured by the Communist cadre.

What happened during this period of a shaky cease-fire in Laos and continued useless bickering at the Geneva Conference? Hanoi had diverted everyone's attention to north-central Laos long enough to reactivate fully the Ho Chi Minh Trail, build up its forces in eastern Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam sufficiently to open an all-out offensive to try to subjugate South Vietnam.

So, Mr. President, I repeat, it is all part of the same war. It is part of the same Communist plan, drawn in Moscow and in Red China, and activated through their puppets in Hanoi.

Of course, Hanoi no longer needed to press its military operations in Laos because the Communists expected to take over South Vietnam and cause Cambodia and Laos to fall into their hands without any major additional effort.

This did not happen—primarily because the United States came to the aid of the government of South Vietnam. As a result, the Communists still must maintain their principal infiltration route through Laos.

Ambassador Durbrow takes the view—and I share that view—that we must continue operations to block the flow of supplies along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and help the Souvanna Phouma Government to preserve its own integrity.

I do not propose—and neither had our President—sending extensive ground troops to fight in Laos. But we must protect our own troops fighting in South Vietnam—and this means we must block the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. We are doing so now with the use of our air power.

We are dealing here with a nation that agreed to the 1962 Geneva Accords—and then promptly began to violate them. We withdrew our 666 Americans while the North Vietnamese pulled out 40 men—and left over 6,000 troops in the country. That is the way they kept their word on the accords.

Mr. President, this has been called our secret war. As a member of the Committee on Armed Services who has listened to testimony about this subject, I have long been aware of developments in Laos. Any other interested Senator, or for that matter ordinary citizen, could do the same by simply reading his daily newspapers.

Certainly, the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations has been a participant in discussions of this subject on a continuing basis. So have others of our colleagues who now appear so alarmed at discovering what they refer to as this new situation.

President Nixon said in his March 6 policy statement on Laos that our Nation has no ground combat forces in Laos. He did confirm, however, what has been

reported extensively in the press—that this Nation has used air power to interdict the flow of North Vietnamese troops—let me emphasize that statement “to interdict the flow of North Vietnamese troops”—along the Ho Chi Minh Trail as it passes from China through Laos.

The purpose of this operation is not to simply protect the Royal Laotian Government; it is primarily aimed at assisting troops from the United States who are fighting in South Vietnam, battling against the North Vietnamese who have invaded a sovereign nation for the purpose of conquest.

Our President told us in his March 6 statement:

Our goal in Laos has been and continues to be to reduce American involvement and not to increase it, to bring peace in accordance with the 1962 accords and not to prolong the war.

President Nixon also noted the limited nature of our current aid to Laos, which was requested by the recognized government of that country and is—in the President's words—“supportive and defensive.”

President Nixon is simply continuing the purposes and operations of two previous administrations—to protect American lives in Vietnam and to preserve an important balance in Laos.

Mr. President, this is no secret war. We have no massive commitment, nor do we plan one. Those who criticize our President know this very well. I have reviewed here our efforts in Laos and the reasons for them. These facts are readily available. I had no difficulty finding them. Neither would anyone else.

Mr. President, I urge an end to attempts to confuse the people of the United States about our commitment in Vietnam—and the effort in Laos, which is a necessary adjunct.

We did not start this war; we are not the invaders—and no efforts by some uninformed, undisciplined, and misled “Peace Now” malcontents will change that fact. The facts of history are clear, to be understood by all who will take the trouble to read. The war was started, is financed, and is being continued by the Communists from the North.

President Nixon does not want to see this war continued, nor does this Senator, nor do I know any Member of this body who feels that way. I have had the privilege of knowing our President personally for many years. He is a peaceful man, not a man of war.

The time has come to dispel the contrived confusion in our Nation. We must let the world know who it is that stands in the way of peace in Vietnam, peace in Laos, and peace in Cambodia. It is not America. It is not the Nixon administration. It is not the American military forces in Vietnam.

The chief barrier to peace in Southeast Asia is the Communists in the North, who persist in an effort to enslave the people of that part of the world—by direct attack, by subversion, and by atrocity.

Those responsible for these problems in Asia are the same group who have been responsible for at least 90 percent

of the problems throughout the world over the last 40 years. They are the imperialists in Moscow who would extend their influence and would attempt to gain control over the governments of all the peace-loving nations presently in Southeast Asia. They would attempt to organize the attack on the Middle East Asian nation of Israel. Their responsibility for the problem is the same.

So, Mr. President, I would say to those who are opposed to these problems, those who would like to see them brought to an end, who at long last would like to see peace brought to our troubled world, that they direct their attention and their remarks to the Governments of Moscow and Red China. I think they could start by using their influence to have these governments and their puppets in Hanoi give decent treatment to our prisoners of war.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the Record at the conclusion of my remarks an article published in the Chicago Tribune of March 12, the “Foreign Press” segment, entitled “Dilemma in Laos.” I recommend it to my colleagues, because it sets out very clearly exactly what the situation is in Laos.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I should now like to refer to another subject. It has to do with the burning of a bank in Santa Barbara, Calif.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed at this point in the Record a statement entitled “Violence in America, One Company's Position,” by the Bank of America, and an exhibit entitled “An Open Letter from the Revolutionary Movement to the Bank of America.”

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

“VIOLENCE IN AMERICA—ONE COMPANY'S POSITION

(Statement by Bank of America)

Isla Vista, California, population 11,250. The business district consists of a couple of gas stations, a few small shops, some real estate offices—and a bank. A large campus of the University of California is nearby. All in all, a normal American suburban community—perhaps very much like the one you live or work in. Normal, that is, until Wednesday, February 25, when violence shattered the peaceful calm of Isla Vista.

At about 8:30 p.m. on the night of February 25, rampaging demonstrators—students and non-students—protesting the “capitalist establishment” converged on the community's small business district.

Several protesters rolled a gasoline-soaked trash bin through a smashed front door in a Bank of America branch and set it ablaze. Other students extinguished the fire. But just before midnight, with the angry crowd in a frenzy, the branch was set ablaze again. While police and fire officials were held at bay by a rock-throwing mob, the bank was gutted by fire and totally destroyed. A police patrol car was overturned and burned. Numerous other fires were started. Windows were smashed and life and property threatened.

These events took place in a community called Isla Vista. They could have happened in your community. They can happen anywhere and with even more disastrous results.

areas. Insofar as I know, we have not given full consideration to using these assets to influence population distribution. But it seems to me an extremely worthwhile suggestion, and I am passing it on to the appropriate people in the Administration.

Certainly, the enormous leverage of federal procurement contracts could be put to use in seeking a more evenly distributed population and full compliance with environmental protection programs. You will be glad to know that an inter-agency task force has been at work on just this problem since before the first of the year, and that we expect to have some initial proposals ready within a month's time.

I hope that this information is useful, and that you will be in touch should you have any further questions or suggestions.

With best wishes,
Sincerely,

WILLIAM E. TIMMONS,
Assistant to the President.

PRESIDENT NIXON COMMENDED FOR DESEGREGATION STATEMENT

Mr. GRIFFIN, Mr. President, the Wall Street Journal recently commented on President Nixon's statement on school desegregation. The tone of the editorial is set by the first paragraph which describes the President's statement as "so sensible that it makes some of the criticisms sound rather ludicrous."

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the article, appropriately entitled "Rule of Reason," be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

RULE OF REASON

The striking thing about the President's statement on desegregation is its tone—a profound concern for the problem coupled with a wholly realistic approach. So sensible is it, in fact, that it makes some of the criticisms sound rather ludicrous.

The chief objection of the critics is that Mr. Nixon did not demand instant school integration. But are they listening to what he said? He is not backing away from the goal of integration; indeed, he is providing considerable sums to assist court-ordered desegregation and improve education in racially impacted areas, North and South.

What Mr. Nixon does perceive is that in distinguishing between de jure and de facto segregation, the complexities involved in the latter are awesome and almost certainly not susceptible to a purely Governmental solution.

There is a Constitutional mandate, he notes, that dual school systems and other forms of de jure segregation be eliminated totally—and that is Administration policy as well. Within that requirement, however, is a degree of flexibility, a "rule of reason" permitting school boards to formulate desegregation plans that best suit the needs of their localities.

De facto segregation, stemming from housing patterns, is another matter altogether. The President holds it to be undesirable but observes that it is not generally considered to violate the Constitution. Even so, he seems to encourage local school officials to take reasonable steps, if they choose, to diminish racial separation.

Mr. Nixon is especially realistic in discussing the difficulties of doing away with de facto segregation: "Racial balance" has been discovered to be neither a static nor a finite condition; in many cases it has turned out to be only a way station on the road to re-segregation."

That is, whites leave the public schools, and the public schools founder for lack of support. Moreover, when whites flee the public schools in search of predominantly white schools in the suburbs, the central city itself becomes racially isolated.

"These are not theoretical problems, but actual problems. They exist not just in the realm of law, but in the realm of human attitudes and human behavior. They are part of the real world, and we have to take account of them."

One of the practical problems in trying to abolish de facto segregation is that it entails a wasteful diversion of resources. Thus a state court recently ordered all but uniform racial balance in the Los Angeles schools, and it is expected that it will cost \$40 million the first year to lease buses, hire drivers and pay operating expenses. How much better if the money were to be spent to improve education.

In a deeper sense, insistence on total integration derives from a misconception of the source of much of the trouble in the education of Negroes. As the Presidential statement remarks, it is not primarily a matter of race at all; rather, it is a question of economic class and environment. Quite simply, a child from a very poor home, where there are no books or magazines or newspapers or parental encouragement to learn—that child is all too likely to have difficulty in school whether he is black or white.

Finally, to demand total integration (as distinguished from ending de jure segregation) is to overburden the schools. In Mr. Nixon's words, the schools "have been expected not only to educate but also to accomplish a social transformation. Children in many instances have not been served, but used—in what all too often has proved a tragically futile effort to achieve in the schools the kind of multiracial society which the adult community has failed to achieve for itself."

We agree with the President that the call for equal educational opportunity is in the American tradition and that the opportunity unquestionably can be extended at the same time that the quality of the education is being upgraded. But the process preeminently requires wisdom, the kind of basic common sense the President's statement reflects.

WE ARE NOW WAGING SECOND INDO-CHINESE WAR

Mr. YOUNG of Ohio. Mr. President, this comes as no surprise to me. It is what one would expect from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the leaders of the all powerful military-industrial complex. It is evident that they seek to move our Nation into a militarist state. Unfortunately, it appears that President Nixon is yielding subservience to the militarists in the same degree as did President Johnson.

Now headlined in the Washington Post we read that General Westmoreland and other army leaders favor a 6-month delay in U.S. troop withdrawals from Vietnam.

Pentagon officials, of course, claim that further withdrawal of ground forces from Vietnam at this time should be stopped so that our pacification program, so-called, and Vietnamization program may continue.

From 1961 to the present time, American military forces have been occupying Vietnam. There has been no Vietnamization, so-called, of South Vietnam. The militarists led by General Thieu and Air Marshal Ky in control of the Saigon

Government represent but a small fraction of the Vietnamese. They have excluded Buddhists and neutralists, so-called, from their militarist government of Saigon. There is a corrupt regime. South Vietnamese forces have no will to fight. Its leaders are continuing the suppression policies of the French colonialists. Eighty percent of the men and women of South Vietnam know that no land reform, not even a semblance of liberty has been offered them by the Thieu-Ky administration and its predecessors.

The Vietcong representing the National Liberation Front have an ideal. They are fighting for land reform and for national liberation. While in Vietnam in 1965 and 1968 I learned that 80 percent of the people living in the Mekong Delta, south of Saigon, supported the National Liberation Front. General Westmoreland and others of our Joint Chiefs of Staff by their actions prove that the Saigon regime is in power only by reason of the presence of the ground and air forces of the United States.

Mr. Nixon, as a candidate for the Presidency, stated repeatedly he had a secret plan to end our involvement in Vietnam. That is still his secret. The facts are this war is now expanding and the United States has now become involved in what should be termed the second Indo-Chinese war. The conflict has spread beyond South Vietnam now. Americans are fighting and dying in Laos and we have invaded Cambodia. Some Americans have been killed there and this conflict is even threatening to extend into Thailand.

The first Indo-Chinese war was waged by the French with the aid of John Foster Dulles and President Eisenhower. When the Japanese suddenly left Southeast Asia in the closing weeks of World War II, the French immediately landed hundreds of thousands of troops and sought to reestablish their cruel but lush Indo-Chinese empire. President Eisenhower instead of enforcing neutrality or coming to the aid of the Vietnamese people seeking national liberation aided the French with billions of dollars in war supplies. He was restrained by action of leading Senators in 1954 from committing our air power to relieve Dienbienphu. Those orders secured on advice of John Foster Dulles and his brother, then head of the CIA, were cancelled at almost the last moment. Dienbienphu was overrun on May 7, 1954. More than 12,000 French Foreign Legionnaires were captured.

Following the surrender, the Geneva Agreement fixed a temporary demarcation line at the 17th parallel providing this was not a national boundary but merely a temporary demarcation line. An election was promised for 1956. President Eisenhower, in his memoirs, stated that Ho Chi Minh would have received 80 percent of the vote for President in both sections of Vietnam. Our puppet President Diem cancelled the election. Then the civil war in Vietnam was renewed.

Now we Americans are continuing the aggression of the French. In fact, the

31 MAR 1970

Red Proviso Rejected in Laos Vote

From News Dispatches

VIENTIANE, March 30—The permanent committee of the Lao National Assembly voted today to support the "idea of conversations," without advance conditions, between the government of Prince Souvanna Phouma and the Pathet Lao.

The vote appeared to reject a Pathet Lao peace proposal that made a halt in U.S. bombing a precondition for starting the talks.

The committee, which is headed by Phoui Sanankhane, the right-wing president of the assembly, also recommended that any future Pathet Lao envoy be empowered to negotiate.

Col. Pradith Thiengtham carried the formal Pathet Lao proposal here eight days ago. He returned to Hanoi Saturday without an answer.

Souvanna Phouma has said that he will reply after consulting with the Royal Council (upper house) and a right-wing faction led by Prince Boun Oum.

In battle action, North Vietnamese troops launched fresh attacks just to the north of the government base at Long Tieng and on another front along the Mekong River within two miles of the Thailand border.

Informed sources said more than 100 North Vietnamese troops, moving under the cover of a mortar barrage before dawn, attacked a govern-

ment hilltop position overlooking Long Tieng. Long Tieng, 80 miles north of Vientiane, is the headquarters of Gen. Vang Pao's guerrilla army and a major base for American Central Intelligence Agency operations.

The attack was repulsed, the sources said. Enemy losses were unknown. Government casualties were described as light.

About 100 miles west of Luang Prabang, the royal capital, some 200 North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao troops made an unusual daylight attack on government positions at Pak Tha on the Mekong River.

Casualties and other details were not known. Field reports said Laotian air force T-28 propeller-driven bombers flying from Luang Prabang made 40 strikes in efforts to drive off the enemy force.

UTICA, N.Y.
PRESS

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MAR 31 1970

If Our Friends Ignore Southeast Asia, We Can't Be Expected to Enlarge War

The Communists seem to be making considerable headway in their new moves in Southeast Asia. In Laos, despite our token efforts, the North Vietnamese and Laotian Reds are advancing without much difficulty. In Cambodia, the neutralization that was started with the ouster of Prince Sihanouk is not going as well as the new government had expected, and the prince is operating from Peking with Red Chinese support.

PRESIDENT NIXON has indicated through his top aides that this country will not expand its participation in Laos, where the CIA has been conducting its own civilian war, and into Cambodia, where it is not known how much, if at all, the CIA has been operating.

It seems obvious now that the North Vietnamese have felt stalemated in South Vietnam, or they might even have felt they were losing ground. To change the focus, they decided to activate their somewhat dormant Laos invasion. Then the Cambodian ouster sprang into being, with the new government there ordering the removal of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops, which had found Cambodia a convenient refuge just over the South Vietnamese border.

OF COURSE, we would like to see the Communists stopped in all three of those countries. But do we want to give further support to the weak Laotian and Cambodian forces, which is apparently part of the Communist strategy to re-ignite the internal strife in this country?

The answer is certainly no, we will not allow our involvement to spread unilaterally to bolster regimes that seem unable to muster enough domestic support to hold back the Communist advances. What we can do is call on other leading powers to join in the effort with us. Such a move, considering the recent history of Southeast Asia, is likely to bring a polite rejection.

That would leave us with a clear conscience in refusing to extend ourselves. The move also would worsen the North Vietnamese position, because, after being badly weakened in the South Vietnam struggle, they would have new debilitating fronts on which to fight.

NO ONE WANTS to see Cambodia or Laos fall to the Communists, but the Reds' move toward that end, whether or not successful, could improve our chances of withdrawal from South Vietnam, which is still the principal aim of our people.

MIAMI, FLA.
NEWS

E - 93,538

MAR 30 1970

We're getting deeper in southeast Asia

Events in Cambodia and Laos tend to confirm the fear that the Vietnam war is spreading across the entire Southeast Asian peninsula.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia was considered something of a liability to the American side because he tolerated the use of his country as a sanctuary by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. His overthrow by a band of generals might have been considered a development in our favor.

It might have been, except that the prince apparently has a wide following among the Cambodian public, which is rallying to support him and getting all the help it needs, of course, from the Communists.

Many knowledgeable Washington commentators believe the State Department was generally surprised when the generals took over and that the CIA was not involved in the coup. But the American public, and Congress as well, have been deceived for so long about our involvement in

Laos, Cambodia and Thailand that an objective judgment is difficult.

In Laos, the Communist Pathet Laos had seemed content to hang on to the Plain of Jars until U.S. forces helped the loyalists drive them out. Now North Vietnam troops are poised at the border and the Laos government fears an invasion on top of its internal difficulties.

As in Vietnam, the disorders in Cambodia and Laos cannot be ascribed entirely to outside influences. In each country there is a strong element of internal discontent and civil warfare.

U.S. prospects for imposing a Western style government in any of those countries are slim indeed and would prove costly in the extreme.

The question is whether the Nixon administration, obsessed with protecting our position in Vietnam, will stumble into two more quagmires as sticky as the first. We earnestly hope President Nixon has learned something from the experiences of his immediate predecessors.

30 MAR 1970

Laos: Next Step in the Big Muddy

Sen. ALAN CRANSTON

Mr. Cranston is a United States Senator from California.

Washington

The people spoke in 1968, and they spoke against the war in Vietnam. But now it is 1970, and American men are still fighting and dying there. Some troops have been withdrawn, but the Nixon Administration has never made it plain that it intends to get all our fighting men out of Vietnam, this year, next year, or any year. It, like the administration before it, seems either unable or unwilling to muster the courage to change our course.

Now there looms the danger of a new Vietnam in Laos. The war in Laos and the war in Vietnam are separate parts of the same conflict.

The Administration, it seems to me, is pursuing a double-risk policy that could keep American troops in Southeast Asia for years. On the one hand, there is convincing evidence that U.S. military involve-

ment in Laos is being escalated in much the same way that we escalated in Vietnam in 1964. On the other hand, Vietnamization is beginning to look more and more like a convenient way for us to create an army of South Vietnamese mercenaries to continue a conflict that is neither in our national interests nor in those of the Vietnamese people.

The war between Communist and other factions in Laos had been sputtering along in a sleepy fashion for years, both sides taking pains to avoid each other whenever possible. Sometimes one side would win, sometimes the other; it depended on the season of the year and the zeal of the local commanders.

In recent years, however, there have been alarming changes in the situation. The United States has created a secret mercenary army of Meo tribesmen. It is commanded by Laotian officers, but its men are recruited, paid, armed, trained and advised by the CIA, and by U.S. military officers. The regular Laotian army seems to have been replaced on the battle lines by these Meo mercenaries. Thai, Nationalist Chinese and Filipino troops also are reported in Laos.

Last summer, the Meo went on the offensive and overran North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao positions on the Plain of Jars. The Meo displayed more initiative and determination than is generally seen in Laos. Predictably, the offensive alarmed the other side. A counterattack was launched and, during the last few weeks, our badly extended mercenaries were pushed back. So the violence on the ground has increased, in part because of American involvement in the war.

While U.S. efforts were helping to escalate the ground war in Laos, American planes were stepping up the air war at an incredible rate. American air activity there jumped from 4,500 sorties a month when the United States was still bombing North Vietnam, to between 12,500 and 15,000 a month today. Much of the increase is our response to expanded use of the Ho Chi Minh Trail by the North Vietnamese, but American bombing missions into other parts of Laos are also significant factors.

The exact nature of the bombing is not known because, like the other aspects of our involvement in Laos, the operations are shrouded in secrecy. In almost every way, the war in Laos has been a secret war. The Administration has kept it that way because the United States signed a treaty declaring we would keep our military personnel out of Laos.

Specifically, the Geneva Accords, signed by the United States and thirteen other countries in 1962, state that "the introduction of foreign regular and irregular troops, foreign para-military formations and foreign military personnel into Laos is prohibited." The treaty defines foreign military personnel to include "members of foreign military missions, foreign military advisors, experts, instructors, consultants, technicians, observers and any other foreign military persons. . . ."

In short, the United States is violating the Geneva Accords and has been violating them for many years. So the Administration has tried to keep the press at bay and to avoid testifying publicly on the real nature of our involvement in Laos.

The Communists, of course, know what we are doing. It's no military secret to them that we bomb them or that our mercenaries attack them. The Communists are violating the Geneva Accords—and won't admit it. The United States is violating the Accords—and won't admit it.

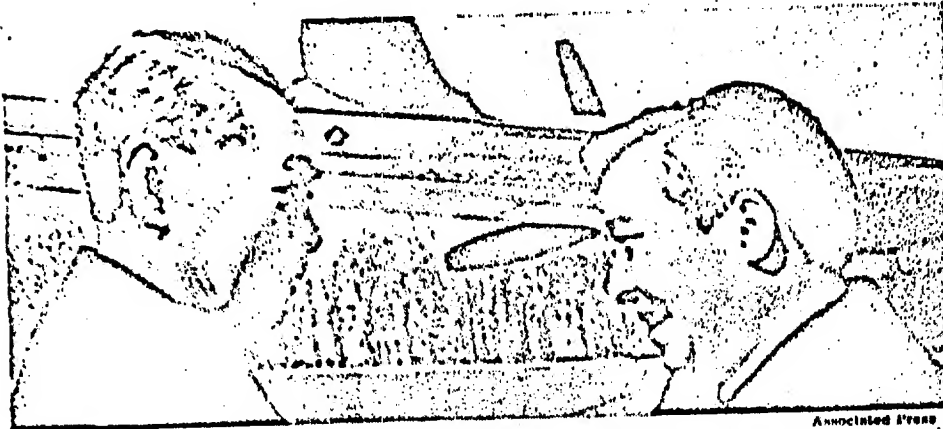
"Civilian" pilots hired by the CIA and AID fly our mercenaries and their supplies around the country, and the government covers the whole thing up as a relief operation to provide supplies for refugees. When the planes are shot down, the embassy in Vientiane simply attributes their loss to bad weather conditions. The Administration conveniently forgets how this practice distorts and perverts the whole concept of foreign assistance.

Meanwhile, our military planes blast away from the air with a considerable degree of immunity. There are those who seem really not to care if the same friendly village is hit three times—as actually happened in Laos—or if women and children in unfriendly villages are burned to death. Money for the secret army and the disguised air flights is buried in CIA and AID budgets, hidden from the people and their elected representatives.

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THE WAR IN VIETNAM

STATINTL



Running out of cards: Amid riots at home, Sihanouk meets Chou



FROM VIETNAM TO INDOCHINA

The War Spills Over as Sihanouk Falls and the Communists Advance in Laos

A lone among the nations of Indochina, Cambodia had escaped engulfment by war, surviving from one crisis to the next in a precarious state of neutrality nursed along by the nimble diplomacy of a royal ruler. "I'll keep maneuvering as long as I have cards in my hand," Prince Norodom Sihanouk once said. "First a little to the left, then a little to the right. And when I have no more cards to play, I'll stop." Last week, Sihanouk's cards were called by his own hand-picked Parliament, which unanimously ousted the Prince from his job as Cambodia's Chief of State. And, in the wake of this stunning development, diplomats were wondering whether a new game might not be shaping up for Cambodia's warring neighbors as well.

Sihanouk's downfall came amidst a bewildering rush of events that posed a still-imponderable threat to the Nixon Administration's carefully nurtured plans for a gradual withdrawal from South Vietnam. For the first time in recent memory,

major military engagements were taking place across the length and breadth of the Indochinese peninsula. With the aid of South Vietnamese artillery called in by U.S. spotter planes, several Cambodian battalions launched an offensive against Viet Cong and North Vietnamese units holed up along the border with South Vietnam. In Laos, Communist forces smashed across the Plain of Jars and were battering at the two key U.S.-supported strongholds of Sam Thong and Long Cheng (map, page 32). And by the weekend, Thailand had leapt into the fray by dispatching, aboard U.S. aircraft, hundreds of regular troops to shore up the beleaguered Laotian base at Long Cheng. Suddenly, as in the days of the French, the war in Vietnam had spilled over all boundary lines and had become a naked struggle to achieve predominance over all of Indochina (page 34).

But if the dominoes were teetering, no one could predict which way they might fall. Despite the discouraging news

from Laos, it looked, for once, as though the Royal Laotian Army had chosen to put up a real fight. And even if the Communists should eventually take over the country, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird vowed to continue U.S. bombings. Nor was the shift to the right in Cambodia necessarily a plus for Washington. Just before the peripatetic Sihanouk left Moscow for Peking last week, Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin warned that the bloodless coup in Phnom Penh "could spark a war between Cambodia and North Vietnam." Once in China, where he was greeted effusively by Premier Chou En-lai, Sihanouk charged that his ouster had been engineered by the C.I.A. and hinted that he might try to stage a counter-coup. But whether the Communists would like to see Sihanouk back in power was open to question. For with the Prince out, the way might now be open for the North Vietnamese Army to impose its will on Cambodia.

For the moment, in short, nothing



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Communist Pathet Lao troops and a Royal Laotian Army outpost. After eight years, only the illusion of peace

continued

SCHENECTADY, N.Y.

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30 Mar 1970

No Escalation

The citizen is pretty much in the dark so far as war in Cambodia is concerned because few persons know what is going on behind the scenes. That has been true of the war in Vietnam and the war in Laos.

The citizen knows what the White House is saying and knows what the various competing politicians and generals are saying in Cambodia. In short, the public knows what's on the surface. But what is not known is what is going on in secrecy — what is being done, for example, by the CIA. Are we getting into deeper trouble without realizing it? No one knows but the few who are directly involved. The President himself could be deceived.

The one thing that is certain is that our people will not be happy about any escalation of war in Cambodia. If our citizens were enthusiastic about the war in Vietnam it could easily be argued that we should be waging an all-out war in Cambodia (as well as Laos) because, for example, 40,000 to 60,000 North Vietnamese troops have been using the border jungles of Cambodia for years as sanctuaries from which to strike against American forces in South Vietnam.

The situation is, in a sense, similar to that during the Korean war when the UN forces were fighting with one hand tied behind their back because they refrained from sending bombers across the line into China, where the Chinese were enjoying sanctuary. (One difference is that had we gone into China we would have taken on one of the biggest and perhaps the most stubborn nation in the world.)

The only people who want us to escalate war in Cambodia and Laos are those who believe that no matter how we go about it we must, at all costs, decisively defeat Communists wherever they rear their heads in Southeast Asia. If what is imperative is American military victory in Southeast Asia then we should be waging fullscale war in Cambodia, Laos and every other country in which there are Communist factions that might constitute a threat.

But very few American citizens want to pull out of war in Vietnam only to get deeper and deeper into war in Cambodia or Laos. It is hoped that President Nixon is making that point clear to any and all persons in military and diplomatic departments that have anything to do with Cambodia and Laos.

DANGER AND OPPORTUNITY IN INDOCHINA

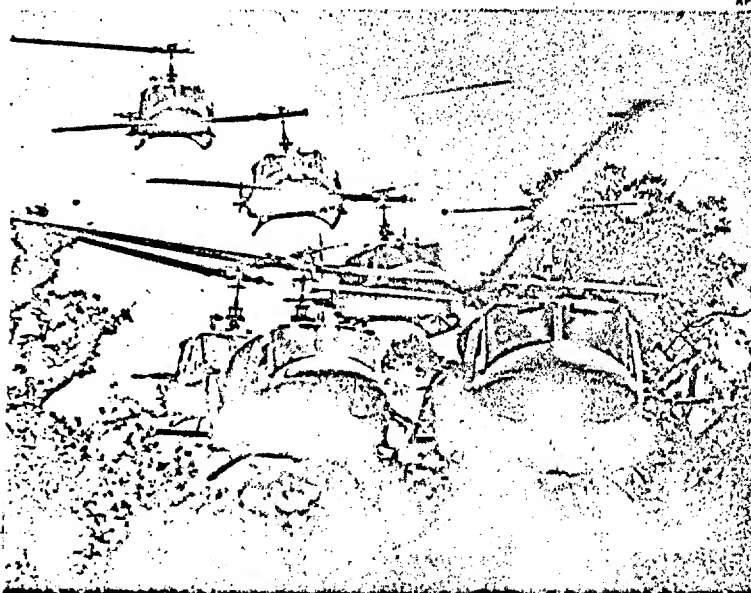
THROUGH the anguished years of the Viet Nam War, Cambodia and Laos have been strictly sidelines. Cambodia has almost entirely escaped the storm of steel that so far has cost the lives of an estimated 610,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops, 175,000 South Vietnamese troops, and more than 42,000 Americans—not to mention some 300,000 Vietnamese civilians. The conflict in Laos, though bloody enough, has not approached the scale of the war in Viet Nam. Now the situation is suddenly changing. Events in Laos and

called for—and got—help from U.S. and South Vietnamese forces. With the war continuing in South Viet Nam and with the North wrestling with the grave problems that have grown out of the conflict, all four states of Indochina were on the boil at the same time (see map).

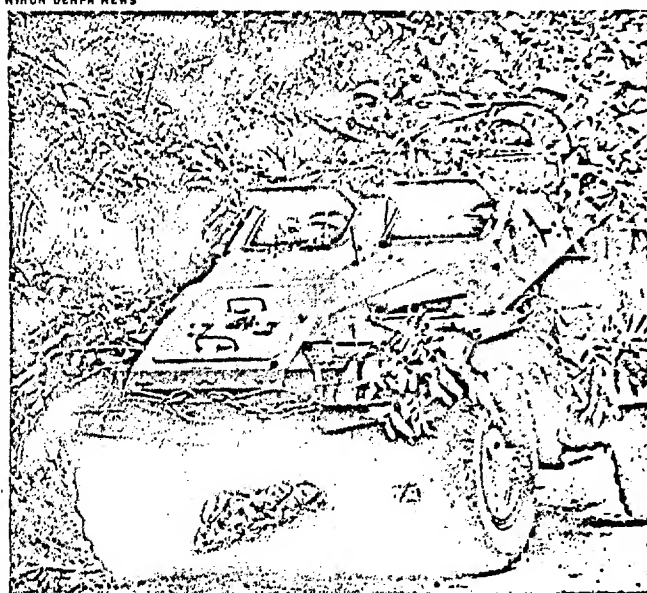
Privileged Sanctuaries

For some time, Laos and Cambodia have served as massive conduits for the flow of men and supplies from North Viet Nam to the southern battlegrounds. There is, of course, the spidery Ho Chi

ern Cambodia are the "Parrot's Beak" and the "Angel's Wing," where five Communist regiments operating in the Mekong Delta "float in and out," as a U.S. source puts it. Farther north in Cambodia is the "Fishhook," only 70 miles from Saigon, which is the haven for two full divisions as well as Viet Cong headquarters. It is no exaggeration to say that the existence of these sanctuaries has virtually precluded a military solution to the Viet Nam War. In fact, General Creighton Abrams, the U.S. commander in South Viet Nam,



HELICOPTERS NEAR CAMBODIAN BORDER



LAOTIAN COMMUNISTS IN SOVIET ARMORED CAR

Changing the whole thrust of the war.

Cambodia last week may well prove to be a watershed in the protracted Viet Nam War. Indeed, they could change the whole thrust of the war.

For the first time since the Geneva accords of 1962 brought an equivocal peace to Laos, Communist troops moved south in force from the Plain of Jars. They seized one key base that had been held by the Laotians with U.S. support and menaced another that serves as the center of CIA operations in the country. The onslaught made it clear that the North Vietnamese could overrun all of Laos at will; what was agonizingly unclear was just how far they intended to go.

Developments in neighboring Cambodia were equally unsettling. In Phnom-Penh, anti-Communists led by Premier General Lon Nol and Deputy Premier Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak deposed Prince Norodom Sihanouk as chief of state and ordered North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops out of Cambodia. In a number of border clashes with Communist troops, the Cambodian army

Minh Trail, threading into South Viet Nam from more than half a dozen points in Laos and Cambodia. There is also the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville, through which, according to some estimates, the Communists get fully 80% of their supplies for the war in the lower half of South Viet Nam. Much of the matériel is brought in aboard Chinese and Soviet freighters and moved north over first-class roads (including one built with U.S. aid) by a fleet of some 500 canvas-covered lorries operated by the Chinese firm of Hak Ly.

Even more important is the use of Cambodia and Laos as privileged base areas for Communist troops. North Vietnamese and Viet Cong hospitals, supply dumps, rest camps and training areas are scattered throughout eastern Cambodia. A 2,300-man headquarters for the joint North Vietnamese-Viet Cong effort in the South lies in a complex of huts beneath a triple canopy of jungle. Some of the sanctuaries bear picturesque names chosen in only because of their geographic contours. In southeast-

has said that if they were eliminated the war would be over within a year.

In recent months, increasing allied successes in South Viet Nam have forced the Communists to lean more than ever on the Cambodian and Laotian sanctuaries. Cambodia in particular noted an upsurge in activity as the allies pressed toward the western frontiers of South Viet Nam. Phnom-Penh, for example, reported 200 attacks by Communist troops on Cambodian outposts in the past few months. In Laos, U.S. intelligence sources note that Hanoi has sent in one fresh 9,000-man division and fully reinforced another in recent months for its current offensive.

Promise and Peril

To policymakers in the U.S., the Cambodian and Laotian crises present a tantalizing mixture of promise and peril. Should the U.S. go to Cambodia's aid if asked, providing supplies or men in the hope of wiping out the sanctuaries once and for all? If the U.S. were to do so, Hanoi might reply by pouring in

continued

more troops and opening yet another front, or by intensifying its thrust in Laos. This, coming at a point when the U.S. is attempting to disengage from the Indochinese quagmire, could prove politically as well as militarily disastrous. The U.S. effort to disengage, in fact, may well have contributed to much of the current turmoil.

If Washington faces difficult decisions over the next several weeks, however, so does Hanoi. Can North Viet Nam stand calmly by and see its supply lines to the South endangered? Should the Communists seize all of Laos, and risk massive U.S. bombing as well as attack by a Thai army that is unlikely to feel comfortable with Communist forces just across the Mekong River? With problems of these dimensions suddenly looming, the next few months are bound to be crucial for Southeast Asia.

The common denominator in the current turmoil is the North Vietnamese infantryman, and his presence in sizable numbers in supposedly neutral lands. Hanoi's forces long ago took on the burden of the Laos campaign from the ineffectual, home-grown Pathet Lao. Neither the frangible Laotian regulars nor the lightly armed, CIA-backed Meo guerrillas of Laotian General Vang Pao have been able to withstand them. In Cambodia, it was North Viet Nam's freewheeling use of Cambodian territory that finally precipitated Sihanouk's ouster. With the U.S. withdrawal under way, Sihanouk grew increasingly alarmed that the presence of so many North Vietnamese and Viet Cong soldiers would encourage Cambodia's own Communists, the Khmer Rouge, to act more boldly. For all his diplomatic dexterity, however, the ebullient prince had found it impossible to persuade his unwelcome guests to leave, and power was seized by men who may try harder. Of course, many observers familiar with the Byzantine workings of Sihanouk's mind suspect that he may have engineered the whole thing as a way of pressuring Moscow and Peking to talk the intruders into leaving. But most analysts suspect that this time no dissembling was involved.

In the Spotlight

Dissatisfaction with Sihanouk has sprung from several sources. Foreign policy intrigues the mercurial prince and so does education, but economic policy, which is vital to Cambodia's welfare, simply bores him. There were rumors that the prince's relatives had profited enormously from government contacts. After Sihanouk was deposed, his wife, attractive Princess Monique, was attacked for alleged profiteering. Even Queen Kossamak, Sihanouk's mother, was the subject of ugly speculation on the same count. "The pretext was that Sihanouk was not doing enough against the Vietnamese," said a young Cambodian businessman. "The real reason was that we were all tired of him."

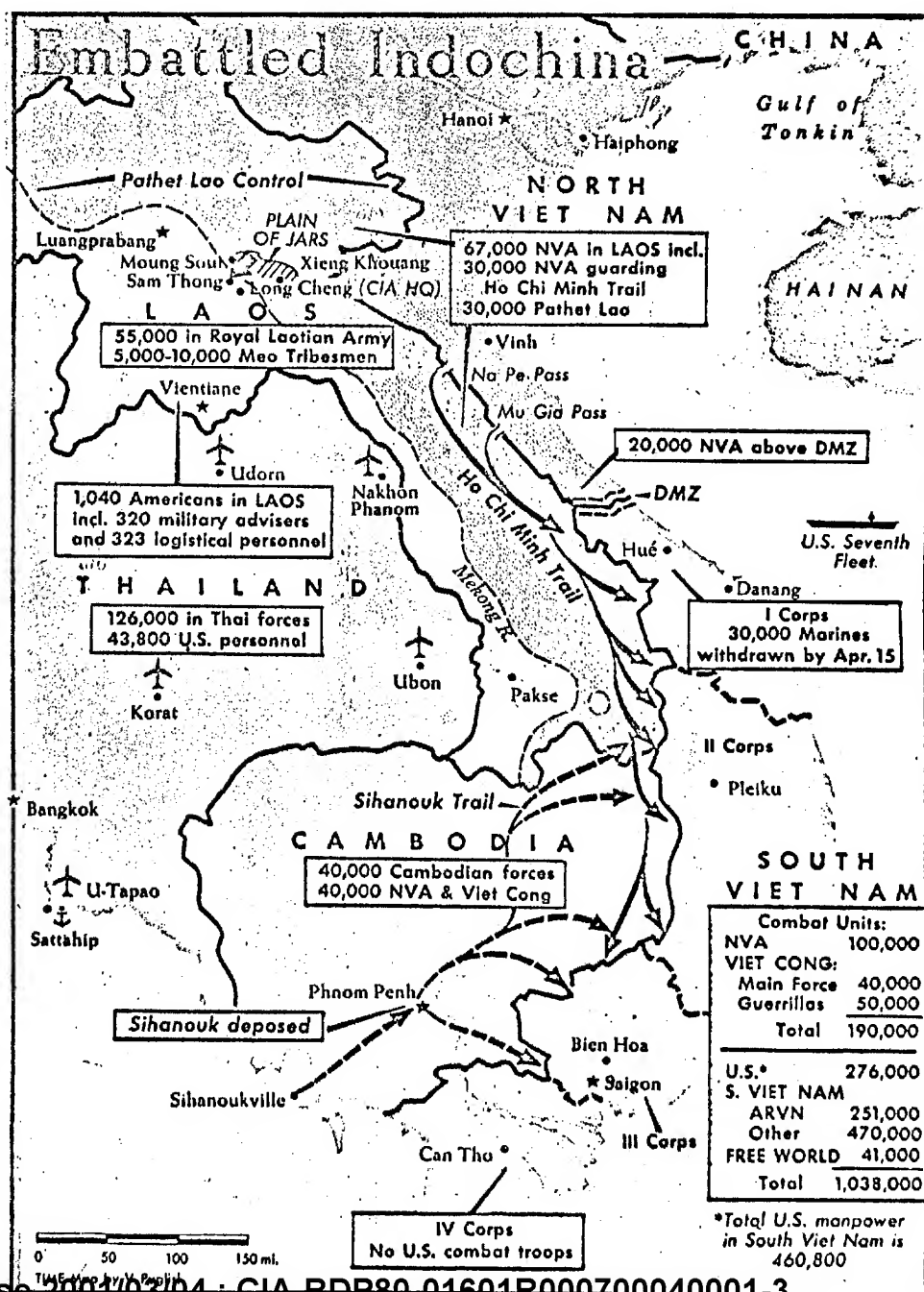
It was Sihanouk's... Approved For Release 2001/03/04 : CIA-RDP80-01601R000700040001-3

kept him in the spotlight both at home and abroad. In the early '60s, the prince concluded that the U.S. would never be able to defeat the Vietnamese Communists. Accordingly, he began disengaging from the U.S. and ingratiating himself with the Soviet Union and, more important, China. In late 1963, Sihanouk ordered U.S. aid officials out of the country, and 18 months later he broke off relations completely.

After Lyndon Johnson's decision to halt the bombing of North Viet Nam, Sihanouk began swinging back toward the U.S. "The American presence helps Cambodia indirectly by maintaining the balance of power in the area," he said. "If the U.S. pulls out of the region, the weight of China will be too great for the small countries of Southeast Asia to bear. They will all become

Maoized. A year ago, during a tour of Cambodia's northeast provinces, Sihanouk saw for himself the extent of Communist occupation. Subsequently, the prince said that he had had enough of the Communist intruders. So had many of his countrymen.

Inevitably, American and South Vietnamese troops were guilty of incursions as well, though not for protracted periods. Last December, Cambodia's United Nations Ambassador, Huot Sampoth, appealed for an end to "this war of extermination" in which, he said, more than 300 Cambodians had been killed and 700 wounded by U.S. and South Vietnamese forces. There was little, however, that Cambodia could do except complain: its scantily equipped 40,000-man armed forces could not adequately patrol Cambodia's ill-defined, 575-mile



continued

Cockpit of Conflict

LITTLE besides geography links the four countries that make up modern-day Indochina—Cambodia, Laos, North and South Viet Nam. For 20 centuries, neither foreign conquerors nor home-grown dynasts have ever managed to persuade the peoples of the verdant, fertile peninsula to collect themselves into a single nation. Indeed, long before the present struggle engulfed them, their differences had led to a history of prolonged and tangled conflicts.

The most constant influence on the area's life, of course, has been China, where the forebears of most present-day Indochinese lived before migrating south centuries before Christ. On all too many occasions, the Heavenly Emperors to the North sent their representatives—sometimes soldiers, more often messengers demanding tribute. The feudal village, with its population of tax-paying peasants and aristocratic protectors, grew out of that practice, and is still the basic political unit in much of Indochina. The Chinese presence was strongest in Viet Nam, which was more or less a colony for nearly 1,000 years; its ancient name in Chinese, Annam, literally means "the pacified South."

The second great culture to reach Indochina was that of ancient India, brought by sailors and traders. Along with their commerce, the Indians carried their culture—the religion of Buddha, works of art, the concept of a god-king. The unique fusion of Indo-Asian culture that resulted reached its greatest heights in Cambodia, the seat of the once-mighty Khmer Empire. Between the 9th and the 14th centuries, the Khmers conquered all of Southeast Asia, from the Mekong Delta in Viet Nam to Burma on the Bay of Bengal, backing up their rule by building an elaborate set of canals and reservoirs and making rice a stable crop. They also left behind one of the architectural wonders of the world: the colonnaded temple of Angkor Wat.

Laos, the Land of the Million Elephants and the White Parasol, managed to conquer the northern reaches of the Khmer Empire in the 14th century. That accomplishment led to Laos' one brief period of expansion. Before long, however, both Laos and the Khmers were caught in the deadly vise of war between Siam (now Thailand) and Annam (now Viet Nam). The enmities between Indochina's present-day neighbors stem in no small part from these wars, which reduced Laos to a tiny mountain kingdom, robbed Cambodia of the rich Mekong Delta (Cochin Chi-

na) and created, for the first time in history, a vigorous unity in Viet Nam between the South (Annam) and North (Tonkin).

France landed its first military expedition in Viet Nam in 1858, ostensibly to protect missionaries who were being put to death by the Vietnamese Emperor for teaching Christianity. Soon the French objective was to colonize rather than Christianize, and by 1883 Paris had established a "protectorate" in Cambodia and occupied all of Viet Nam; in 1899, it placed a *résident supérieur* in Vientiane. Economically, the French were unabashed parasites. As one report of the time put it: "Colonial production must be limited to supplying the mother country with raw materials."

Politically, the French were not so much oppressive as inept. Administrators often knew next to nothing about the land and people in their charge, and few were in office long enough to learn; between 1892 and 1930, Paris dispatched 23 governors-general to Hanoi. Outside the major cities of Viet Nam, French secondary schools were almost nonexistent; by 1939, Phnom-Penh's only school beyond the primary level had graduated a grand total of four students.

Resistance groups flourished almost from the start. Ho Chi Minh, who was to wage the most protracted and successful struggle against the French, was forced to leave school in 1910 for anti-French opinions. The Japanese occupation of Indochina during World War II swept away the myth that the white man was indestructible. Before long, that dramatic discovery led to a place and turning point called Dienbienphu.

Engulfed in the miseries of war for 25 years—or longer—Indochina's newly independent people have not yet recaptured an identity with their past. Few Vietnamese, North or South, can find much reflected glory in the elegant red-and-gold lacquered panels of Hue's imperial city. Laotians, living in the shadow of the war next door and amid the growing misery of the one in their own front yard, take small comfort in the ancient Buddhist temples of Luangprabang. To a certain extent, Cambodians could relive the triumphs of the Khmers in the resounding rhetoric of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who at least kept the kingdom independent. Clearly, if the past sometimes seems impossibly remote and unreal to Indochina's long-suffering peoples, that is the result of an all too real present.

frontier with Viet Nam. A typical technique was to send a single Cambodian trooper, mounted on a motorcycle, to the site of a border violation. The soldier would race up to the invading troops, wave a Cambodian flag at them and try to persuade them to leave. It is a tribute to Cambodian bravado that the tactic sometimes worked.

Energizing the Economy

Last summer Sihanouk made the two men who eventually overthrew him the principal figures in a "movement of salvation" designed to energize Cambodia's stagnant economy. Both had been key officials for some time. Lon Nol is a quiet, pragmatic 56-year-old general who has been Cambodia's best-known anti-Communist for many years. He became head of the national police in 1951 and entered the army in 1952, taking part in operations against the Viet Minh invaders until the end of the French war in Indochina. Three years after joining the army, he became its chief of staff, and in 1966 was elected Premier. He resigned the following year after suffering injuries in an auto accident, but returned to the government in 1968 as Defense Minister. In mid-'69, when Lon Nol was again elected Premier, he demanded—and got—substantial powers from Sihanouk.

Prince Sirik Matak, 56, who helped Lon Nol depose Sihanouk, is the scion of the Sisowath branch of the royal family (Sihanouk is of the Norodom branch). A more colorful figure than Lon Nol, he could emerge as Cambodia's real new leader. Though he has practically made a career out of publicly opposing Sihanouk on major issues, his unquestioned ability has all but guaranteed him a succession of important government posts. With Lon Nol, he has long fought Sihanouk's policy of tolerating the Communist border presence, but he has struggled hardest to free the economy of oppressive government controls and corruption.

Familiar Gambit

Last January, with domestic conflicts developing over economic reforms and the issue of the Vietnamese troops, Sihanouk decided to depart for France. It was a familiar gambit—leave at a time when trouble is brewing, come back after the situation has worsened, point out how inefficient the temporary chieftains have been and then create a flurry of activity that resembles a solution. This time, however, Sihanouk's absence simply gave Lon Nol and Sirik Matak time to plot.

In February, the governors of Cambodia's 19 provinces met in Phnom-Penh. As they reported, one by one, on their problems, it slowly became apparent that unrest extended over most of the nation—and that the chief source of the trouble was the North Vietnamese presence. Lon Nol and Sirik Matak decided that something had to be done to save the country from the seriousness

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of the situation to both the wandering Sihanouk and the North Vietnamese.

To this end, they organized mass demonstrations, first in Svay Rieng province, site of the Fishhook sanctuary, then three days later in the capital. Thousands of civil servants, students and soldiers in civilian clothes joined in. Many of the placards they carried had been printed on government presses. The North Vietnamese and N.L.F. embassies were sacked. Though the demonstrations were sparked by the army, there was enough spontaneous participation to indicate a high level of popular hatred for the North Vietnamese. It was then that the anti-Sihanouk forces seriously began to consider ousting the prince.

Object Lesson

Other factors helped crystallize their feelings. The continuing disintegration in Laos, for instance, was an object lesson in the perils of a large North Vietnamese troop presence. In addition, exploratory post-riot talks with the affronted North Vietnamese in Phnom-Penh got nowhere. The Communist diplomats brushed aside the rights or wrongs of their military presence; they were only interested in reparations and a public apology for their ruined embassies. At that point Sihanouk weighed in with a cable warning of Soviet unhappiness with the demonstrations and indicating that he had no plans to get tough with Hanoi's representatives. Lon Nol and Sirik Matak decided that the time had come to shut the door on the returning prince. The National Assembly and the Council of the Kingdom removed Sihanouk as head of state and named Assembly Speaker Cheng Heng as his acting successor.

The first sign that Sihanouk might have lost control came when air controllers at Phnom-Penh's Pochentong Airport began to turn away incoming airliners. A Burma Airways plane, whose passengers included a U.S. Coast Guard officer en route to Cambodia to negotiate the return of the hijacked *Columbia Eagle* (see THE NATION), was in its approach pattern when it was waved off. A few hours later, a government communiqué announced: "In view of the political crisis created in recent days by the chief of state, Prince Sihanouk, and in conformity with the constitution, the National Assembly and the Council of the Kingdom have unanimously agreed to withdraw confidence in Prince Sihanouk." The coup had a distinctive Cambodian flavor. Some of the tanks drawn up around public buildings in the capital had white kerchiefs over their gun muzzles, and scores of soldiers were seen snoozing on the grass, many without shoes.

Impossible Ultimatum

Sihanouk heard of his overthrow from Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin in Moscow. At first he took the news calmly. A few hours later, just before flying off to Moscow, he told his

mier Chou En-lai, he told Cambodian students at Vnukovo II Airport that he might establish an exile government in Moscow or Peking. Earlier, he had sent off a cable to his mother quoting Kosygin as having said: "If the extreme right continues to strike foul blows on our allies, war is inevitable between Cambodia and Viet Nam."

Back in Phnom-Penh, Lon Nol and Sirik Matak had been doing their best to make Kosygin's allies uncomfortable. They sent *pro forma* notes of apology to the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong for the damage to their embassies but at the same time handed the Communists an ultimatum: all of their troops must be out within three days.

It was an impossible demand, and Cambodia's new leaders made no move to enforce it. In fact, they made a point of announcing that Cambodia

immediately split in two, half staying with the Premier and the balance joining the Pathet Lao. Pathet Lao ministers in Vientiane, rightfully fearing assassination, fled to the Plain of Jars in 1963 and formed a rump government. The right wing made a bid to seize full power in 1964. At that time, the U.S. dropped its backing of the rightists and swung its support to Souvanna. The idea of tripartite rule was dead.

Unsettling Element

For the next five years, the strategically located Plain of Jars remained in Communist hands; most of the fighting in that period occurred around the periphery of the plain, and the Communists went no farther south. Last fall Vang Pao's CIA-backed army, aided by heavy U.S. air support, succeeded in driving the Communist forces from the plain.



CHENG HENG



LON NOL



SIRIK MATAK

Enough spontaneity to indicate the popular hatred.

would maintain its traditional policy of neutrality and nonalignment. U.S. sources in Saigon reported some increase in the number of enemy troops crossing into South Viet Nam about the time the ultimatum expired, but the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese are still estimated to have close to 40,000 men in Cambodia.

Coming Unstuck

While Cambodia's new leadership moved to consolidate its hold, the military situation in Laos continued to disintegrate. That was not altogether startling; ever since the establishment of a neutralist tripartite government in Laos as a result of the Geneva accords of 1962, news from there had generally been gloomy. Under the accords, the country's three major parties—the Neo Lao Hak Xat (Communist), the Neutralists under Souvanna Phouma, and the right wing under General Phoumi Nosavan—were to work together in a single government. Souvanna held the balance of power as Premier, and Cabinet posts were shared by all three groups.

This solution began to come unstuck almost as soon as it was pieced to-

Five weeks ago, reinforced North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao troops reoccupied the plain—and this time they decided to go farther. After pausing to resupply, the Communists moved southeast. Late last week government forces abandoned Sam Thong to the Communists, and North Vietnamese troops were reported on the verge of attacking the CIA center at Long Cheng.

With the government forces in serious trouble, Vientiane sent in reinforcements, including a number of extremely young conscripts. Unexpectedly, several hundred Thai mercenaries were airlifted into Long Cheng by Air America, the CIA's Asian airline. This marked the first time that Thai participation in the Laos war had been officially acknowledged by the U.S.—though Thai artillery units and pilots are known to have fought in Laos on several previous occasions. It was a turn of events that intensely displeased doves in Washington. "It's too bad," said Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J.W. Fulbright. "It's a very unsettling element."

As the Communist pressure mounted, a Pathet Lao emissary flew into Vientiane or Souvanna

Approved For Release 2001/03/04 : CIA-RDP80-01601R000700040001-3

continued

Phouma. It was assumed that the message included a proposal calling for a conference of Laotian political factions on the question of a settlement, and for an end to U.S. bombing in Laos. In the past, Souvanna has countered such proposals by insisting that North Vietnamese troops first be withdrawn from his country; this time, in the face of the North Vietnamese advance toward Long Cheng, there was a faint chance that Souvanna might agree to talks with the Pathet Lao (which is led by his half brother Prince Souphanouvong). Despite the increased pressure, Vientiane remained characteristically tranquil. Even the news of Sihanouk's overthrow failed to stir much of a reaction. Most attention was focused on the flamboyant wedding of Souvanna Phouma's son to a Thai model, an event attended by smiling representatives of Western and Communist powers.

A Smile from Thieu

The parallel crises in Indochina evoked strikingly cautious comments. Where Cambodia was concerned, officials were wary of pronouncements because no one could firmly count Sihanouk out for good. Given his popular support and his penchant for the surprise initiative, Sihanouk may well remain an important factor in Cambodian politics for some time to come. To be sure, he was not giving up without a fight. In Peking, he charged that his removal had been "absolutely illegal" and demanded a referendum under neutral supervision. Both Moscow and Peking emphasized that they still considered Sihanouk to be Cambodia's chief of state. In Washington, Cambodia's stability is considered essential to peace in Southeast Asia.

For that reason, a ranking White House official said: "We're not going to take any action that could foul us

up. We're playing it cool." In Saigon, where Sihanouk has long been considered a Communist dupe, there was undisguised pleasure. South Viet Nam's President Nguyen Van Thieu had just finished telling a group of Asian newsmen, "We can be friendly with a neutral country, but 'neutral' does not mean being in complicity with the enemy," when an aide handed him the news of Sihanouk's downfall. Thieu broke into a broad grin.

Hanoi's response was, naturally, less enthusiastic. North Vietnamese successes in Laos seemed to be offset by the uncertain situation in Cambodia. Without a guaranteed border sanctuary, Communist forces could expect severe difficulties, particularly if Cambodian forces started acting in conjunction with allied troops. Would North Viet Nam fight to keep the sanctuary? That may not be necessary. In any case, for the time being Hanoi appears to be keeping the fighting in South Viet Nam at a low level. Ho Chi Minh's death last September may well be the reason. Sir Robert Scott, former British Commissioner General for Southeast Asia, notes in *Foreign Affairs* that the new leaders in Hanoi "do not now feel the same urgency to translate Ho's vision into reality in his lifetime." Adds Scott: "There is no purpose to be served by shedding too much blood to win what they expect to win anyway."

Plus and Minus

In terms of the Viet Nam conflict, last week's developments appear to leave Washington with one questionable plus—Cambodia—and one probable minus—Laos. Whatever may happen in Laos, the U.S. is extremely unlikely to use ground troops—as Senator Fulbright informed the world last week by releasing secret testimony by Secretary of State William Rogers. Rogers said that

the Nixon Administration had "no present plans" to send G.I.s to Laos even if Communist troops threatened to overrun it. Nonetheless, Defense Secretary Melvin Laird indicated that the U.S. would probably continue to bomb the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Cambodia could be a plus—over the short run, at least—provided the situation does not degenerate into anarchy and prompt a panicky Hanoi to mount a full-scale invasion. (Sihanouk was useful in that he kept Cambodia stable. If the new regime swings violently anti-Communist, there could be serious trouble.) Hanoi, too, had a mixed week, with a definite plus in Laos all but outweighed by a possible minus in Cambodia. The survival of the sanctuary in Cambodia is now in question; supplies coming through Sihanoukville reportedly have been slowed, and some Communist troops may soon begin to feel the pinch of hunger.

One positive factor for everybody would be a multinational peace conference whose aim would be a settlement embracing all of Indochina. The Soviets have opposed reconvening the 14 nation Geneva parley until the U.S. stops its bombing in Laos; the dangers posed by Sihanouk's departure from the scene could persuade them to drop their opposition. Hanoi, with its lifeline in Cambodia endangered, now has more reason to come to the bargaining table. A more remote possibility is that the Communist Chinese, whose foreign policy is no longer distorted by the lunatic frenzies of the Cultural Revolution, might be persuaded to join. Last week's demonstration of Indochina's chronic instability may eventually prove persuasive enough to bring all the nations concerned to the bargaining table. Nothing, in all likelihood, could do more to please Norodom Sihanouk, or Souvanna Phouma, or Richard Nixon.



BOYISH LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT DEFENDERS NEAR HO CHI MINH TRAIL



YOUTHFUL PATHET LAO SOLDIERS IN PLAIN OF JARS AREA

BILLINGS, MONT.
GAZETTE

MAR 29 1970

M - 42,441
S - 54,232

Vietnam Is a Continuing Tragedy—Mike Mansfield

By ROGER HAWTHORNE
Gazette Staff Writer

"It will be a near miracle" if American troops are withdrawn from Southeast Asia within the next 15-20 months, U. S. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield says.

"I wish it would happen. I wish they could be gotten out sooner because I think becoming involved in Vietnam was a mistake and a continuing tragedy," the Montana Senator says, with obvious emotion in his voice.

Mansfield says he doubts American troops will be withdrawn on any large scale because of developments in Cambodia and Laos.

MANSFIELD stopped in Billings during the Senate break for Easter.

"As far as Vietnam is concerned, the question why we are there is one that has plagued me for many years. We shouldn't be there.

"As of last Thursday, there were something on the order of 318,000 casualties in Vietnam alone.

"Approximately 50,000 were deaths, 42,000 combat deaths and 8,000 noncombat deaths. The rest were wounded.

"WE HAVE spent well over \$100 billion in that war to date and now we have the situation in Laos which is taking more in the way of our resources.

"The Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese have advanced beyond the Plain of Jars. They are within 20 miles, I understand, of the Royal Lao-tian capital of Luang Prabang.

"The Chinese have built a road down from Muong Leo in Yunnan Province (in China) to Muong Nhie. They have built an extension eastward toward Dien Bien Phu some 25 miles and one

southwestward toward Muang Khuoa about 40 miles.

"That brings them within 20 miles of the Thai border.

"THEY (the Chinese) have about 8,000-10,000 labor troops and antiaircraft personnel guarding these roads. They have not participated actively except in defensive actions in that area in the extreme northern part of Laos.

"The North Vietnamese, according to the President, have 67,000 troops. The Pathet Lao have 15,000-20,000, I understand.

"Last year the Senate passed the Cooper-Church resolution which forbade the use of U.S. Combat troops in Laos and Thailand unless it was with Congressional assent.

"The administration supported that amendment.

"I DO NOT expect that any ground troops will be used, but it appears that air attacks have been stepped up in an attempt

to reinforce (General) Vang Pao's so-called clandestine army.

"But the North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao keep on coming.

"If they stop where they are now, it will be a remarking of the old line (during the late 1950's and early 1960's) and maybe it will hold for 2-3 months until the rainy season ends.

"Then the other side will go back to the line to which they used to advance in other years.

"IT'S A terrible war in that country because the Laotians are probably the most peaceful people in the world and the world's worst fighters.

"The fighting being done is being done by the North Viet-

namese on the Pathet Lao's side. What is being done on our side, the Royal Lao-tian side, is being done by American planes from Meo tribesmen under General Vang Pao."

Mansfield admits that the Central Intelligence Agency "has contacts with Vang Pao's Meo Army. "I think those contacts are remaining constant and have been the last three or four years.

"We have become aware of that recently.

"IT IS NOT public knowledge but we have had Mr. (Richard) Helms (director of the CIA) before us so we have a pretty good idea what the situation is there.

"We do not intend to become involved CIA or otherwise, and the Cooper-Church amendment will be adhered to."

News reports say Vang Pao has 40,000 Meo tribesmen in his army, which is supported wholly by the CIA, with the army located about 40 miles north of Vientiane.

"What you have in Laos is a differential between the lowland Laotians and the Meo, Yaos, and Lolos who are the highland people," Mansfield says.

"THEY DON'T get along with one another.

"The Meos are carrying the most of the fighting at this time, doing the best they can, but it's not very well.

"In Cambodia, I think that the deposing of Prince Sihanouk could turn into a tragedy. Regardless what we think of him personally, he did keep Cambodia together and he did maintain a neutrality of sorts.

"He had to confront border activities as far as U.S. and South Vietnamese operations were concerned. He suffered casualties for which we have paid indemnities.

from the eastern provinces of Cambodia clear over the northern frontier to the provinces of Cambodia clear over the northern frontier to the province of Batdambang on the Thai frontier.

"What will happen now may well mean that the Chinese will support Sihanouk. He may line up with the people who used to be his enemies—the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese.

"It might well be a new ballgame as far as Cambodia is concerned.

"As far as we are concerned, I don't think we ought to send in any troops or offer any aid but stay clear of it completely.

"I HAVE approved the President's phased withdraw out of Vietnam. My only complaint is that it isn't fast enough.

"However, the situation which has developed in Laos and Cambodia may well bring about a stop to even that much withdrawal because a situation might develop there that would call for the attention of American personnel.

"It would be my hope as far as Laos is concerned that the two brothers, Prince Souphanouvong, head of the Pathet Lao, and Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma sent to Souvanna Phouma and received, I believe, Wednesday, to see if they can't

work out some sort of agreement.

"I WOULD hope that the ICC, the International Control Commission, would be beefed up, given more money and use its offices to bring about a degree of stabilization.

"I would hope that President Nixon's request to the United Kingdom and the USSR, the co-chairmen of the Geneva Convention which set up the neutrality of Laos in 1962, would call the Geneva conferences together to the end that a settlement could be achieved.

"It's my belief that if there is going to be peace in Laos, there is going to have to be peace in Cambodia and the two Vietnamese as well.

"The only way that peace can be ensured, I think, is to have a guarantee of neutrality on the part of the Geneva conferees for all of Indochina and Thailand as well," Mansfield says.

DES MOINES, IOWA
REGISTER

M - 246,841

S - 514,496

MAR 29 1970

Fighting for Opium

Americans whose drug addictions are limited to the "normal" alcohol, tobacco, patent medicine and prescription varieties get a chill of horror at reports of 60 per cent marijuana use in the American infantry company involved in the My Lai massacre. Their spines tingle with horror at the word that the Meo tribal faction in Laos recruited by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency into a "clandestine army" are less interested in "fighting Communist aggression" than in retaining and acquiring opium poppy fields.

In South Vietnam and Laos, where anarchy and civil war have been going on for years, both opium and marijuana are readily available and occupy about the same place in the scheme of things that alcohol and tobacco do here.

Laotian opium is a special case. Governments have been trying since Theodore Roosevelt's time to limit growth of opium poppies to world medicinal needs and to regulate international traffic in opium and its derivatives (which include codeine, morphine and heroin). But in the chaos of Laos such efforts are largely futile.

Opium is the major cash crop in the Laotian highlands, among the Meos and other tribes. In this almost roadless country, a high-value cash crop which is low in weight and bulk is an economic boon. The Meos consume some of their own product and think they are conferring a benefit, not harm, in selling it to far-off lowlanders.

In the early days of American aid to Laos it was a problem to keep Laotian

opium dealers (who often double as royal officials) from using U.S. planes to transport their costly freight.

Air-dropped U.S. arms and supplies made it possible for years for many hill-top Meo villages to retain their independence (and their poppy patches) in spite of being surrounded by Communist-held land. Now that most of these warrior villagers have been evacuated by air, the Meos still retain hope of winning back opium fields again, with U.S. arms and air support. From the Meo point of view, this is all quite logical and upright.

The CIA and the Pentagon are willing to go along, on the theory that this is "fighting for freedom." The Meo view that the fight is for opium fields is more forthright and more accurate, but it raises the awkward question, What kind of business is that for the United States?

M - 246,841

S - 514,196
MAR 29 1970

How the U.S. Called Its Own Bluff in Laos

By Denis Warner

THE BIGGEST single deterrent to a no-limits North Vietnamese offensive in Laos always has been the uncertainty about what American reaction might be. Since the Tet offensive, when American optimism and interest in Southeast Asia began to evaporate quickly, the deterrent has been substantially less than it used to be, but at least it was better than nothing.



DENIS
WARNER

Now, after months of pressure, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee finally has extracted, and published, the admission from the Nixon Administration that it has no plans for using ground forces in Laos, even if the North Vietnamese overrun the entire country. In view of the continuing American reaction to the war in Vietnam, the news can scarcely be said to be a bomb-

shell — either to its American allies or to Laos. But for the security of Laos and the whole region it would have been better left unsaid, or, if the Senate Foreign Relations Committee insisted on knowing all, at least kept secret.

Memories are short these days. Only 20 years have passed since South Korea was excluded from the list of countries that came under the shade of the American defense umbrella. The North Koreans accepted this as the green light

Denis Warner, an Australian journalist, has been writing about Southeast Asia for more than 25 years.

and the Truman Administration was forced to do some quick rethinking and reacting, at the cost of immense amounts of blood and treasure.

Things are very different these days. The United States at the height of its postwar power in 1950 had no second thoughts about moving to the defense of Korea and its more vital interests in Japan. Judging by the mood of the na-

tion and the watchdogs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it is highly improbable that any second thoughts now would be of a type calculated to send waves of G.I.s across the Mekong.

In fact, the publication of Defense Secretary Melvin Laird's statement clearly brings appreciably closer the end to American efforts, clandestine or otherwise, to prevent the North Vietnamese forces from rolling as far as they want through Laos. Bombing and budgetary support to the Royal Lao government excepted, these efforts have always been low key, as the grudging admissions of casualties by the Nixon Administration have now made clear.

In fact, if any agency other than the CIA had been involved in providing the material support and military guidance for Gen. Vang Pao and his Meo guerrillas, the point might well have been made that the United States was doing very little militarily to help preserve the Royal Lao government.

Still, for many months the Nixon Ad-

ministration has been quietly trying to persuade Laos that it will soon have no alternative but to do much less. It did not succeed in getting the message across. This will be easier now, though the effects are likely to be quite different. Instead of being coaxed to do more, the Laotians can scarcely be blamed if they begin to regard the situation as hopeless.

Under pressure to show the state of its mind, the Nixon Administration also has been obliged to show its hand, and there is no easier way than this to lose the poker game. Since Hanoi no longer has any reason to doubt what Washington has in its hand, and there are now no lines that it is unsafe to cross, there seems to be no reason why the North Vietnamese should not now push on as far as they want.

This is just as far as may be needed to get neutralist Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma to settle with his Communist half-brother Prince Souphanouvong — on Souphanouvong's own terms.

99 MAR 1970

STATINTL



"The CIA welcomes you to Laos, men."

MILWAUKEE, WISC.

COURIER MAR 28 1970

WEEKLY 17,000

STATINTL

Black Alliance charges federal crimes in car bombing

The following statement was issued March 12 by the Black Liberation Alliance in Chicago, Robert Lucas, chairman.

We charge the Federal Government with the crime of wantonly murdering our two brothers, Ralph Featherstone and (apparently) William "Che" Paine.

We suspect, although we may never be able to prove it, that agents of the Federal Government were directly involved, probably because they thought that Brother Rap was in the car. This is the way that the CIA has operated all over the Third World, from the Congo to Laos, from Ghana to Vietnam. If they are in the way, people of color and their leaders are mysteriously blown to bits, with even less thought than if they were boulders blocking a road or trees blocking a view.

But directly involved or not, the Federal Government is responsible for initiating the chain of events that has now resulted in this heinous crime against Black people. Just as the Mayor of Memphis, Tennessee, created the political climate of violence and hysteria which led to the wanton murder of Dr. King in the spring of 1968, the Federal Government today, with its repressive legislation against Movement activists, such as the "Rap Brown" Anti-Riot Act and the Anti-Conspiracy Act, and its bringing to trial of Movement activists on the basis of this repressive legislation, has now created the political climate of violence and hysteria which has led to the wanton murder of these two dedicated, hard-working unsung fighters for human freedom.

For the last many years it is the Federal Government itself which has been responsible for the growing chaos and disorder in and around the courts. By its deliberate efforts to muddy-up the fundamental distinction between crime, it has fostered disres-

pect for the judicial process, incited to riot and murder, and unleashed the most reactionary forces in the nation.

By sending in agent provocateurs to Movement organizations, as in the notorious alleged plot by RAM to blow up the Statue of Liberty, it has deliberately instigated and sought to provoke freedom fighters to acts of terrorism which only end in their imprisonment or death.

THE TIME HAS COME TO TAKE SOME SIGNIFICANT STEPS TO BRING A HALT TO THIS VIOLENCE AND UNENDING INCITEMENT TO VIOLENCE BY THE GOVERNMENT. TO THIS END WE DEMAND:

1. That the Federal Government itself take the initiative immediately to move the dismissal of all charges against H. Rap Brown as well as against all other political defendants, Black and White, who have been charged under the Anti-Riot, Anti-Conspiracy Acts and similar repressive legislation.

2. That steps be taken immediately to repeal the Anti-Riot and Anti-Conspiracy Acts.

3. That the FBI, the CIA and police departments across the country immediately destroy their dossiers on Movement activists and that the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigation of the Committee on Government Operations of the U.S. Senate, whose extensive and published hearings have revealed only a small part of what is contained in these dossiers, be immediately disbanded.

4. That whatever agent provocateurs have been or are dis-

closed to be involved in acts of terrorism charged against Movement activists, the charges be brought instead against these agents and the official agencies employing them, for conspiring to violate the civil rights of citizens.

WE CALL UPON THE BLACK COMMUNITY AND ALL DECENT CITIZENS ACROSS THE NATION TO SUPPORT THESE DEMANDS WHICH ARE NECESSARY TO CLEAR UP THE CALCULATED CONFUSION BETWEEN POLITICAL OPPOSITION AND CRIME, WITH WHICH THE GOVERNMENT IS SEEKING TO DESTROY THE MOVEMENT.

At the same time we call upon Black organizations to appoint their own legislative committees to determine the guilty parties to this murder and we demand that the Justice Department and all other officials on every level cooperate with this Committee, giving it the right to subpoena persons and documents and granting it access to all files and information related to this and similar crimes.

In particular, we urge Movement people to reflect upon the need for new forms of organizations which will minimize future opportunities for the enemy to waste our brothers and sisters.

We cannot continue to lose our Medgars, our Malcolms, our Martins, our Freds, our Marks, our Ralphs and our Ches.

Dan Aldridge
James Boggs
William Strickland
Robert Lucas
John Watson
Mike Hamlin

28 Mar 1970

WATCHING THE WORLD

with FRANK J. GARDNER



An ounce of prevention?

A CLOAK-AND-DAGGER operation off the West Coast of Africa has the offshore oil industry agog.

In what is perhaps the first instance of underwater sabotage of a mobile drilling rig, some rascal tried to sink the Kenting 1 jackup off the Ivory Coast. That's the rig that's destined for the Gulf of Suez to drill a most controversial wildcat for Israel's Oil Routes Ltd. next to Egypt's El Morgan oil field (OGJ, Feb. 9, p. 37).

As usual in such incidents, very little is known of the who, why, when, or where of the attack.

For several weeks, the Kenting 1 had been undergoing repairs in Dakar, Senegal. It was damaged in a severe winter storm while crossing the Atlantic from eastern Canada.

Apparently, while rounding the African hump, something went awry, and the rig was towed into shallow water at the port of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, for a checkover.

There, it's reported, frogmen under cover of darkness tied four explosive charges to the rig's hull, at or near the water line. The four blasts failed to penetrate the double hull, however, and none of the crew was injured. There was, of course, some damage to the unit's legs.

WHODUNIT? That's the big question now.

Well, there are lots of possibilities. First off, one would suspect the Egyptians, but Abidjan is 2,800 miles from Cairo (crow-style), and it's doubtful Egyptian intelligence is that far-flung these days.

Someone aboard the rig? We prefer this one, for there was just a little too much coincidence in the sudden detour, to Abidjan and the almost immediate sabotage of the rig. Someone onshore must have heard from someone offshore that the Kenting would put in at Abidjan. Or was some kind of hanky-panky on board, the rig responsible for the need to go into port?

The industry buzzes with theories, of course. One, described by the offshore press as "way out," holds that it was the work of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. That figures, for the CIA habitually gets the blame for whatever happens anywhere.

Still, three governments involved—the U.S., Canada, and Britain—are known to fear that Israel's sinking a wildcat off the west coast of the Sinai Peninsula could well set off an inferno in the Middle East. And so, the speculation goes, as an ounce of prevention, any one of them may have concluded that it would be better to sacrifice a \$2.8-million rig than to risk another war.

Or perhaps the whole thing is simply a matter of predestination. The Kenting 1, a new rig, has yet to drill a hole. It failed its first assignment in Lake Erie when its legs sank into the lake floor. It was heavily damaged in the Atlantic storm. It's been condemned by

now the sabotage.

27 MAR 1970

U.S. planes blast sites in Cambodia

Daily World Foreign Department

U.S. planes made heavy air strikes on Cambodian territory last Tuesday, the U.S. military command in Saigon revealed yesterday. The U.S. jet fighter-bomber raids were ordered on what the U.S. command described as "enemy firing positions" in Cambodia "with unknown results." The air strikes followed B-52 bombing attacks all along the Cambodian-South Vietnamese border.

The U.S. raids were the first reported since the ouster of Prince Norodom Sihanouk by an anti-Communist military group headed by General Lon Nol.

The U.S. command yesterday also reported the second heaviest U.S. casualties of this year in fighting in South Vietnam. Last week, 110 Americans were killed and 864 wounded; Saigon forces lost 398 killed and 902 wounded.

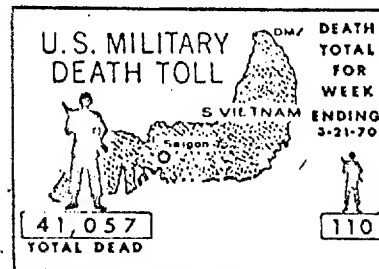
In continuing fighting in Laos, U.S. planes made repeated air strikes in tactical support of a "Royal Lao" army drive to try to win back territory lost to the Lao Patriotic Front. LPF troops were reported to be dug in on a ridge three miles north of the big U.S. base in northern Laos at Long Cheng.

The government of Thailand yesterday requested the reconvening of the 1962 Geneva Conference on Laos. The Thai Foreign Ministry accused the Democratic Republic of Vietnam of sending troops into Laos but continues to deny U.S. news reports that thousands of Thai troops are fighting there on the U.S. side. A United Press International report yesterday stated that "specially-trained tribesmen from Thailand" were airlifted into Long Cheng by "Air America," the CIA-operated airline in Southeast Asia.

The DRV and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam recalled their diplomatic representatives from Phnom Penh, Cambodian capital, for "consultations," and it was announced that diplomats from all socialist countries will meet in the Polish Embassy in Phnom Penh at a farewell party for the DRV and PRG representatives.

In the Paris peace talks, the

Saigon delegate, Nguyen Xuan Phong, offered to release what



he said were 343 "North Vietnamese" prisoners of war "with no strings attached" and said he hoped the DRV would accept them. Saigon has never offered

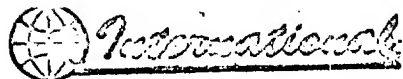
to release any of the estimated 25,000 National Liberation Front prisoner of war status.

In Long Binh, South Vietnam, U.S. Army lieutenant James B. Duffy, 22 admitted yesterday he had killed a Vietnamese prisoner.

He told a military tribunal he had radioed his company commander that the Vietnamese had been "shot while trying to escape."

"In war, people are going to get killed," Duffy said. "This major told me I was to kill and not bring back prisoners. I considered it part of the war."

27 MAR 1970



Songmy and marijuana — drug cult illusions spiked

WASHINGTON — "A majority of those shooting were marijuana smokers but not all the marijuana smokers were shooting."

That was how Sen. Thomas J. Dodd summarized the testimony March 24 of Vietnam veteran Charles West, who was with Company C of the First Battalion of the 20th Infantry at the time of the mass killings at Songmy of Vietnamese civilians by U.S. troops on March 16, 1968. West testified at hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, and he agreed with Dodd that that was a correct summation.

Other remarks by West, and by Dr. Joel H. Kaplan, an Army psychiatrist who also served in Vietnam, take issue with certain illusions among drug addicts, especially those of so-called "soft" drug users who have built up quite an argument for using marijuana.

West said he smoked marijuana twice, and that the second time when he went on guard duty "it seemed to me the vegetation was moving. I thought it was people."

Dr. Kaplan, who commanded an Army neuro-psychiatric team at Nhatrang, Vietnam in 1968 and 1969, said that before going to Vietnam he did not consider marijuana a dangerous drug. Now, however, after finding that 3,000 soldiers, or 70 percent of the men his outfit saw in its outpatient clinic, used drugs "heavily day in and day out," Dr. Kaplan believes marijuana smoking "could have contributed" to the Songmy massacre if it could be shown that the U.S. soldiers were "chronic pot-heads."

West said the men on the Songmy mission had included "chronic users" of marijuana.

"Before I went to Vietnam," said Dr. Kaplan, "if I had heard someone saying what I'm saying today, I would have laughed." What he said was this: "Contrary to many popular opinions held here in the states, the drug could cause people to become fearful, paranoid, extremely angry, and led, in a number of cases, to acts of murder, rape and aggravated assault."

So much for the illusion current in the United States that marijuana is an innocuous substance that merely makes people feel relaxed and amiable, with heightened sensibilities and sexual potency.

Other facts brought to light by the testimony of West and Dr. Kaplan give a cue to the prevalence of the drug cult which has turned off so many young Americans from struggling to change society and turned them into petty criminals, the prey of drug peddlers, police informers, or purposeless and pliable ciphers.

Whether the Pentagon and its money-grubbing accomplices in the world of high finance permit the Senate subcommittee to probe further and expose the real conspirators behind this chemical war against U.S. youth remains to be seen. But the drug cult is highly lucrative and where there's loot to be pocketed — legal or illegal — the Big Money is sure to be there.

Its web of intrigue, smuggling, and black marketeering in the countries of Indo-China is widespread. According to I. Andronov, A Soviet newsman writing in New Times of March 3, 1970, this web includes such Free World stalwarts as Vang Pao, the CIA's Meo mercenary leader now attacking the Pathet Lao villages; General Phoumi Nosavan, once the CIA's chief "boy" in Laos who now lives in Thailand; Saigon's puppet vice president Nguyen Cao Ky, ex-chief of the Saigon air force; Colonel Khu Duc Hung, the Saigon military attache in Vientiane; and the chief profiteers and black marketeers in Saigon — all Americans.

—Observer,

'Vietnamizing' Cambodia

World opinion will hold the United States directly responsible for any future strife involving Cambodia, where a pro-U.S. rightist military group has seized power and proclaimed the ouster of Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

The Cambodian coup comes at a time when the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency is active all over the world: the attempt on the life of President Makarios of Cyprus, the abortive coup against the new People's Republic of the Congo-Brazzaville the intensification of the CIA "dirty war" in Laos, involving the use of U.S. and Thai ground troops and a U.S. terrorist air bombardment.

Cambodia, under Sihanouk, stood up to Washington's empire builders and defied them. This is why the U.S. for years tried to overthrow Sihanouk.

Sihanouk immediately recognized the new Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam last year as the real representative of the South Vietnamese people, developed close and friendly ties with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and worked to end the war in Laos on the basis of the 1962 Geneva Agreement.

This policy cost Cambodia heavily, in daily U.S.-Saigon air raids which killed and wounded hundreds of peaceful Cambodian villagers, in CIA-led armed rebellions inside Cambodia, in U.S. threats to invade Cambodia and to crush Sihanouk with force.

Both the DRV and PRG have branded the Cambodian coup a CIA operation, and there are few who will doubt it considering the background of the coup. Sihanouk, according to U.S. news reports, is still immensely popular in Cambodia and the new regime is nervous about any attempted return he might make.

The Nixon administration's pious humbug about "Vietnamization" in the light of developments in Laos, Cambodia and Thailand can now be pinned down for what it is—"Vietnamization" means spreading the Vietnam war all over Southeast Asia.

If a Cambodian revolt against the millionaire pro-U.S. General Lon Nol produces a second Vietnam in this hitherto neutral country, Nixon and the CIA will have to be given the full credit for that kind of "Vietnamization."

21 MAR 1970

STATINTL

Cambodia, Laos: Acid Test for the Nixon Doctrine

BY ROBERT S. ELEGANT

The Vietnam war has been vitally affected by outside events: The removal of Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia and the sustained Communist drive against Laos.

Those events prove afresh the obvious propositions Americans are loath to accept: external developments deeply influence the Vietnam conflict; and, the corollary, the outcome in Vietnam will directly shape the future of Southeast Asia and, indirectly, the rest of the world.

The shifts in the equilibrium of power raise an immediate question: Are they good for Asians—and Americans?

The answer at this stage is a resounding "Maybe!" The prospects are almost equally balanced. The new toughness toward Viet Cong units in Cambodia is largely offset by the imminent threat of Communist control of Laotian supply lines.

One feared deprivation has, however, been postponed. Prince Sihanouk has not ceased his brilliant performance on the Asian stage.

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Instead, he has within four days:

- Denounced North Vietnamese infiltration of Cambodia and, later, implicitly endorsed that infiltration.

- From the unlikely platform of Peking, declared that he would not seek to regain power and, later, raised the banner of a "national liberation army" to regain power through civil war.

- Finally, proclaimed a new political movement called "The National United Front of Kampuchea (Cambodia)." The official abbreviation, his statement meticulously notes, is FUNK.

Though Sihanouk still commands some popular support, FUNK is not likely to topple the new regime—even with Viet Cong assistance. Cambodian, American and South Vietnamese troops are already co-operating against Communist concentrations on the border, while Phnom Penh can easily turn off massive supplies now flowing to the Viet Cong through Sihanoukville.

Weak Cambodian forces can probably do little more than harass the Communist invaders. Still, halting supplies and co-ordinating intelligence could severely impede their operations in Vietnam — if Cambodia avoids crippling civil war.

But the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos remains the key.

Receding before the powerful Communist drive, Air America, the CIA airline, has already withdrawn planes from forward bases. Udorn in Thailand is likely to be the main new base for essential air support. Since Thai troops just committed cannot halt the Communist drive, Hanoi can take all Laos at will.

The Nixon Doctrine, which left open the possibility of armed assistance to Asian nations invaded by foreign troops, is being tested. North Vietnam has invaded Laos to protect its channel of reinforcement—and to try the President. If Laos falls, all rules will change.

Though its effect is limited, bombing the trail could presumably continue—if requested by a government in exile. But tribal irregulars organized by the CIA and Special Forces could no longer harass North Vietnamese replacements effectively.

Moreover, the psychological effects would be shattering. The United States would have demonstrably failed to protect its allies, and Thailand would be wholly vulnerable to Communist infiltration—or invasion. Even the anti-Communist Cambodians might well conclude, that they had after all made the wrong move.

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Sihanouk is now in Peking, and the Chinese have staked out Phongsaly in northwest Laos as an area of special influence. Washington and Peking are, therefore, met in a direct psychological confrontation.

Peking apparently is not primarily interested in "liberating" South Vietnam or Cambodia. But Peking is vitally concerned to strengthen its buffer states — Communist North Vietnam and potentially Communist Laos.

Washington virtually invited the invasion of Laos through a Senate resolution last December and the deliberate imprecision of the Nixon Doctrine. Although that imprecision appeared desirable last summer, unpredictable events centering on Vietnam have, once again, flung a challenge and offered an opportunity to the United States.

American public opinion debars using a few American troops to turn the tide in Laos. Yet we must, somehow, consolidate the Cambodian advantage, avoid a Laotian debacle—and, thus, move towards a Vietnamese success.

27 MAR 1970

Souvanna Replies to Pathet Lao

From News Dispatches

VIENTIANE, March 26 — Laotian Premier Souvanna Phouma today wired Prince Souphanouvong, the head of the Pathet Laos, complaining of North Vietnamese "interference" in their country.

The telegram, viewed here primarily as a means of calling attention to the presence of the 50,000 or more North Vietnamese troops in Laos, did not constitute a reply to Souphanouvong's five-point peace plan, which Prince Souvanna said in his cable "we are in the process of studying."

Souvanna said, "In your letter of the 22d of this month, you have proposed that the International Control Commission should supervise the presence of foreign troops in both zones.

"The royal government only knows about the interference of North Vietnamese troops in Laos for many years now. This is a problem that you have chosen not to mention either in your five-point programs or in other messages."

Asked in an interview whether he thought there was a possibility of an agreement with the Pathet Lao, the premier said: "It is rather difficult because the given conditions are considered by us as unacceptable." He said that if his government agreed to an American bombing halt, it would be a unilateral concession to the Communists.

Souvanna said the present North Vietnamese offensive is the beginning of "a different crisis" in Southeast Asia that may have a link with developments in Cambodia and South Vietnam.

"It is a desire for hegemony by North Vietnam," said Souvanna.

"I believe North Vietnam was aware beforehand of what would happen in Cambodia. That's why they started an offensive, in order to put the Pathet Lao in a strong position for conversation with us."

Meanwhile, sporadic fighting continued around the CIA base at Long Tieng, southwest of the Plain of Jars.

Military sources said North Vietnamese troops launched company-sized attacks against two government positions on Skyline Ridge, a hill overlooking the base. The sources said both attacks were repulsed with "very light" government casualties.

S 4650

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

March 20, 1970

structionist" that Mr. Nixon promised to appoint when he campaigned for the Presidency.

In speeches across the country, Mr. Nixon promised to name men to the high court who would "interpret" the law, not "make" it.

In 11 years as a Federal District Judge in Tallahassee, Fla., and in six months as a member of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, Judge Carswell sprinkled the lawbooks with opinions on matters ranging from civil rights to the legality of Florida's poultry law.

Throughout these opinions runs a consistent tendency to view the law as a neutral device for settling disputes, and not as a force for either legal innovation or social change.

AN IRONIC COMPARISON

An ironic byproduct of this consistency is that Judge Carswell's judicial record is more conservative than that of Judge Clement F. Haynsworth Jr., who was defeated for confirmation to the same seat by liberal forces that branded him as a conservative who was "not a contemporary man of the times."

Judge Haynsworth was ahead of the Supreme Court in devising fuller review for state prisoners in Federal habeas corpus proceedings, and occasionally anticipated the high court in ruling in favor of Negroes in civil rights cases.

An exact comparison with Judge Carswell is difficult, as the new nominee served as a trial judge much of the time, and most of his opinions dealt with day-to-day issues rather than sweeping constitutional matters. But the lawbooks contain at least 25 appellate opinions he wrote when he sat, as District Judges frequently do, on the Court of Appeals.

These opinions reveal a jurist who hesitates to use judicial power unless the need is clear and demanding; who finds few controversies that cannot be settled by invoking some settled precedent, and who rarely finds the need to refer to the social conflict outside the courtroom that brought his cases before him.

ATTITUDE OF RESTRAINT

This attitude of restraint has generated friction only in the field of civil rights, where Judge Carswell's policy of sticking with settled precedents until change came from higher courts had the result of allowing dilatory school officials to delay segregation.

An example was provided when parents of Negro children in the Pensacola area sued to break up the segregation of faculty and staffs in the formerly all-black school. Although the higher courts had not said in so many words that faculty, as well as student, segregation must end, lawyers for the Negroes argued that these courts could not have meant that the newly integrated schools would be staffed with all-black and all-white faculties. Judge Carswell ruled otherwise.

"The Brown cases," he wrote, referring to the Supreme Court's landmark school decisions of 1954 and 1955, "hold that the segregation of white and Negro children on the basis of race denies to Negro children equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution." He put the word "children" in italics, and went on to state that these decisions and subsequent ones by the Fifth Circuit did not reach the question of faculty desegregation.

NOT DIRECTLY AT ISSUE

"This court can not indulge in a presumption that these Federal courts decided the points of law asserted by plaintiff by inference," he said, because staff members' rights were not directly at issue in those cases.

Finally, he declared, students have no standing to intervene in such matters: "Students herein can no more complain of injury to themselves of the selection or assignment of teachers than they can bring action to

enjoin the assignment to the school of teachers who were too strict or too lenient."

Some civil rights lawyers who have appeared before Judge Carswell have charged that his tendency to issue declaratory judgments rather than injunctions—to hand down limited desegregation orders rather than sweeping ones—was a convenient use of judicial self-restraint to cloak segregationist sympathies.

Leroy D. Clark, a professor of law at New York University, who formerly headed the operations of the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., in northern Florida, asserted in an interview today that Judge Carswell had repeatedly delayed school cases by failing to rule until pressed to do so, and then by often issuing decisions that were palpably wrong and quickly reversed.

"We would have a hearing and it would take several months for him to rule," Mr. Clark said. "I would have to file a motion to ask him 'would you please rule?'—which is outrageous."

"It was my view that of the Federal District judges I appeared before, Harold Carswell was clearly the most openly and blatantly segregationist. He was a clever and an intelligent man, so that when he was wrong on the law it wasn't because he didn't know what the law was—it was because he was biased."

... wrote a political science dissertation in 1963 that analyzed the civil rights decisions of the 31 Federal District Judges appointed to posts in the Deep South between 1953 and 1963.

When she ranked the 31 judges in terms of the number of times they had ruled in favor of Negro plaintiffs' position, Judge Carswell ranked 23d. Her study showed that, of his civil rights decisions to be appealed, 60 per cent were reversed.

In most of these cases, Judge Carswell would have had to move beyond clearly settled precedents to rule in favor of the civil rights position. When these precedents have existed, he has struck down segregation in crisp forthright opinions.

In 1965, he declared that the barber shop in Tallahassee's Duval Hotel had to serve Negroes under the public accommodations provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

He brushed aside a barber's assertion that he was not covered because 95 per cent of the customers were local people and not guests in the hotel. "From a reading of the act it is clear," Judge Carswell observed, "that relative percentages of local, as compared to transient, customers may not be used as criteria to determine coverage."

PROSPECTS BRIGHTER

In 1960 when Tallahassee Negroes sued to desegregate the counters, waiting rooms and restrooms in the city-owned airport, he did not hesitate to order desegregation.

Even though Judge Carswell's civil rights record may be fully as objectionable to civil rights forces as that of Judge Haynsworth, the new nominee's prospects for confirmation seem much brighter, partly because he has not antagonized organized labor as Judge Haynsworth had.

Federal District Judges rarely rule on labor cases, which are usually appealed from the National Labor Relations Board directly to a Court of Appeals.

Tom Harris, the official of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations who led the successful attack against Judge Haynsworth, said today that Judge Carswell "doesn't appear to have a significant record on labor cases." He said the AFL-CIO had no plans as present to oppose him.

The few labor opinions that Judge Carswell has written reflect his reticence to use judicial power and his tendency not to extend the judiciary's power.

SOME DISSENTING OPINIONS

In one decision, when a three-judge Court of Appeals ordered a soft-drink company to

comply with the minimum wage laws, he dissented, saying: "It is my view that the injunctive power of courts should never be invoked lightly, nor should it be converted into a mere ministerial function triggered automatically upon the finding of an infraction of the law."

Judge Carswell's opinions tend to be bloodless documents, setting out the facts and the precedents, then briskly coming to a conclusion that is said to be within the precedents.

He is not given to broad statements of his philosophy, but his creed at this point in his career seems to have been summed up in one statement from an opinion he wrote shortly after he became a judge in 1958: "Established law, with its imperfections, must nonetheless be applied as it is and not on the predilections of the court."

WHY THE LONG DELAY IN RELEASING THE LAOS TESTIMONY

Mr. SYMINGTON, Mr. President, it is now more than 5 months since the Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee on U.S. Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad completed its hearings on Laos.

The record of those hearings remains classified top secret at the insistence of the State Department. That record contains a great deal of information about U.S. activities in Laos which the American people should know and have a right to know. Repeated attempts on the part of the subcommittee to persuade the State Department to declassify portions of the record, however, have been to no avail.

We want it to be clear, Mr. President, that we have never suggested the entire record should be published. I agree it contains some material which should not be published. But it contains a great deal of material which should be published if the American people are to maintain that proper confidence in their Government.

Almost daily the press makes more revelations—or raises more questions—about what is going on in Laos, and in Thailand as it affects Laos.

The Washington Star, in a dispatch by Henry S. Bradsher from Udorn, Thailand, March 15, described how the air war in Laos is run out of seven bases in Thailand, sometimes with unmarked planes.

The Washington Post on March 16, in a dispatch by T. D. Allman from Vientiane, reported in detail how 12 Americans were killed 2 years ago defending a secret air navigation facility at Phou Pha Thi, Laos.

The Washington Star on March 17, in a dispatch by Tammy Arbuckle, described the evacuation of Sam Thong, Laos, by Air America. This story went on to say that there have been approximately 70 Americans in the Sam Thong-Long Chien area armed with M-16 rifles and captured Communist AK-47 submachineguns.

In a dispatch from Vientiane March 20, the Associated Press reported that two Thai battalions have been flown to Long Chien in U.S. civil aircraft to help defend that Army base from an expected North Vietnamese onslaught.

On March 23, a story from Bangkok by Jack Folsie in the Washington Post de-

Cambodia dictator acts to bar Polish embassy

Daily World Foreign Department

The Cambodian government has advised Western diplomats that it is closing down the port of Sihanoukville to what it says are ships bearing arms to the "Vietcong" in South Vietnam. The move was announced yesterday to the diplomats in a special briefing by the Cambodian Foreign Office in the capital of Phnom Penh.

A Foreign Office spokesman also disclosed that the Embassy of the Polish People's Republic was being closed down, but denied knowing why or whether this meant a break in Polish-Cambodian relations. Poland, together with Canada and India, is a member of the International Control Commission (ICC) set up by the 1954 Geneva Agreement to watch over Cambodia's neutrality.

General Lon Nol, the armed forces commander and new anti-Communist premier of Cambodia was reported to be on the verge of renaming Sihanoukville and proclaiming a republic.

The reports, from official Cambodian sources, said that in a few weeks Cambodia's constitutional monarchy would be declared abolished. The monarch—Queen Kossamak—is under heavy guard in Phnom Penh. Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the Cambodian chief of state, remains in Peking, where he has announced he will form a liberation army to overthrow the Lon Nol government.

Lon Nol has already suspended all civil rights provisions of the Cambodian constitution, under the "full powers" granted him by the National Assembly last week. He has accused Sihanouk of being a "dictator" and of secretly signing an agreement with the "Vietcong" to transship arms from China across Cambodian territory into South Vietnam.

Warning by Pravda

Pravda, the Soviet Communist Party newspaper, yesterday praised Sihanouk's policy of neutralism and said any changes by the Lon Nol government would

encourage a U.S.-backed war over all of Indochina. It said the Lon Nol government was supported by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Neither the new Cambodian regime nor the U.S. has offered any evidence of their charges that Sihanoukville was being used for arms shipments to the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam.

Sihanoukville, on the Gulf of Thailand, was built in 1960 as a new port city for Cambodia. Previously, all traffic had to use the Mekong River (through South Vietnam) to reach Phnom Penh. The main port facilities at Sihanoukville today are a 900 foot wharf reached by a 600 foot causeway. Ships of up to 15,000 tons can discharge cargoes on both sides of the wharf, but this is a rather slow process since no cranes have been installed in the dock area as yet. Sihanoukville still remains to be linked to the interior by railroad.

Battles in northern Laos continued yesterday around the main CIA base of Long Cheng, 75 miles

northeast of the capital of Vientiane.

Lao Patriotic Front forces have captured a Thai mercenary flown into besieged Long Cheng by the CIA-operated airline "Air America." Angnet, admitted that he had served under the command of the U.S. military mission in Vientiane. He said in January, 1968, he was sent to the U.S. base at Long Cheng and then to another base at Muong Ta.

He said there were 600 Thai troops at Long Cheng under joint U.S.-Thai command, and that 40 Thai paratroop officers serve as Lao General Vang Pao's staff, while 30 more (officially listed as "interpreters") directly supervise combat operations. He also said at Long Cheng the CIA had set up a communications center for direct contact with Washington.

The interview with this Thai mercenary was published by Vietnamese News Agency of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Meos Bolster Bases' Security

By T.D. Allman

Special to The Washington Post

VIENTIANE, March 25—When Laotian government troops reoccupied Skyline 1, a hill position two miles north of Long Tieng, they re-established a measure of security for that important base and also for a vital U.S. telecommunications station nearby.

The station, known as Skyline 2, provides a beacon for U.S. bombers operating in northeast Laos and also serves as a relay for U.S. and Laotian military communications.

Military sources said today that U.S. personnel had been evacuated from Skyline 2 but that the station's automatic equipment could continue to function so long as periodic maintenance can be performed.

Early this morning, two North Vietnamese battalions attacked another government position six miles north of Long Tieng. The military sources said government troops withstood the attack until dawn, when U.S. aircraft intervened and the Communists withdrew.

A so-called Spooky gunship, a propeller-driven plane heavily equipped with machine guns and flying from a base in Thailand also reportedly strafed Communist positions

around Long Tieng last night and today.

Military sources said today they were optimistic that Long Tieng, menaced by five North Vietnamese battalions since the fall of Sam Thong last week, could be defended.

Some 800 Thai troops have been flown there to bolster defenses. Reliable sources said today the Thais would man artillery positions.

U.S. sources denied reports that they were led by American Special Forces.

Other reliable sources, however, have reported an increase in American personnel at Long Tieng as the Ameri-

cans plan the defense of the CIA base, which is also the headquarters for Meo General Vang Pao's clandestine army.

The sources said they were optimistic about Long Tieng because of what they called its ideal defensive position ring of high, government-held hills and because of the difficulty the Communists would have with the rough terrain and intensive U.S. bombing.

Meanwhile, in northern Laos, government troops are reportedly continuing to retreat following their loss of three upper Mekong River villages.

Pathet Lao and North Viet-

namese troops late last week regained Ban Hat Teu and two nearby villages that government troops had taken in an American-assisted airborne operation six weeks ago.

All three villages lie on the Mekong, about 30 miles west of the royal capital of Luang Prabang. Government troops reportedly suffered extremely heavy casualties in last week's fighting.

Military sources said today the apparent aim of the Communist attacks around Ban Hat Teu was to cut river traffic between Luang Prabang and Ban Hoeni Sal, 100 miles upstream.

25 MAR 1970

Purge in Cambodia reported continuing

Daily World Foreign Department

Cambodia's new rightist military regime reacted swiftly yesterday to a Radio Peking broadcast in which Prince Norodom Sihanouk called for formation of a "Cambodian national-liberation army" to carry on the "struggle against the American imperialists" and their puppets in Cambodia.

General Lon Nol, the Cambodian armed forces commander, who headed the coup which proclaimed Sihanouk's ouster last Wednesday, pushed ahead with a purge of Sihanouk's supporters from the government, the army and the Sangkum party.

Sihanouk will be tried for high treason if he tries to return to Cambodia, the new regime has indicated. Lon Nol's government has tried to remove every possible trace of Sihanouk, but U.S. reporters found that the prince is still popular with ordinary Cambodian people.

The Hanoi newspaper, "Nhan Dan," organ of the Vietnamese Workers' Party, said on Tuesday: "U.S. intrigues in Cambodia show the extremely reactionary nature of the Nixon administration, which despite heavy defeats, is still looking for ways of expanding and protracting the war in Indochina." The newspaper called the Cambodian people "our comrades-in-arms in the struggle against our common enemy—American imperialism."

Giai Phong ("Liberation") News Agency, the official press service of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, said yesterday: "The danger of aggression against Cambodia, and against Vietnam and Laos as well, comes from the U.S. and its puppets. The way to eradicate this danger is to unite in the struggle against American aggressors."

CIA role stressed
On Monday, "Quan Doi Nhan Dan," a Hanoi newspaper, bluntly stated that "the coup in Cambodia was staged with the participation of the U.S. CIA."

The Paris daily, "Combat," wrote: "There is no doubt that the White House was informed in advance of the Cambodian coup and approved it."

In interview printed yesterday by the Times of London, the new Cambodian ruler, Gen. Lon Nol, denied working with the CIA.

"We, as the government of salvation," he said, "had to request full powers in order to protect all those demonstrators."

He was referring to the thousands of people who sacked the DRV and PRG embassies in Phnom Penh two weeks ago.

New York Times reporter Henry Kamm wrote on March 14 that the mobs "were believed to have been instigated by the military."

The Lao Patriotic Front radio late Monday broadcast the peace proposals sent by LPF leader Prince Souphanouvong to "Royal Lao" Premier Souvanna Phouma. The broadcast said the LPF asked Souvanna to call an "immediate, complete and unconditional halt" to U.S. bombings in Laos, in order to demonstrate

the "Royal Lao" government's genuine interest in a peaceful settlement.

The LPF accused President Nixon directly of "escalating the war in Laos to an unprecedented degree," and warned Premier Souvanna Phouma that he "must bear full responsibility personally for the dangerous situation in the country."

The only basis for peace, the LPF said, is the five-point LPF peace plan calling for a ceasefire, an end to U.S. involvement, and a provisional coalition government prior to national elections, as foreseen by the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.
BULLETIN

E - 654,741
S - 697,004

MAR 25 1970

Congressman Links War in Laos to U.S. Heroin Traffic

Los Angeles — (UPI) — Rep. John V. Tunney last night charged the Nixon Administration with involving American troops in a Laotian tribal war being fought over one of the world's largest opium growing regions.

"The CIA has committed the United States to support a faction of Meo tribesmen led by General Vang Pao, whose sole objective is to dominate other factions of this opium-producing tribe throughout northern Laos," he said.

Tunney, seeking the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate, told the Wilshire Chamber of Commerce that recent battles over the Plain of Jars

were related to tribal antagonisms and the opium fields are the prize.

The area is capable of producing four to ten tons of marketable opium annually, he said, which refined as heroin would bring nearly \$900 million on the American market.

"It is not impossible to believe that our unexplained actions in northern Laos could be a vital link in the chain of drug traffic to the United States," he continued.

"By providing military assistance, air support and munitions to the Meo tribesmen; by reinforcing their efforts with Thai and American troops; by assisting them in maintaining their

territory, it is within the realm the U.S. government could be of possibility that the clandestine yet official operations of aiding and abetting heroin traffic here at home."

25 MAR 1970

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COVERS ALL OF INDOCHINA

Thais Are Only Part
Of U.S. 'Secret Army'

By TAMMY ARBUCKLE

Special to The Star

VIENTIANE — The Thai troops who have joined the fighting in Laos are part of an American-directed "secret army" which operates all through Southeast Asia.

Making up its units are Cambodians, Vietnamese, Chinese and Laotians, as well as Thais and various hill tribes, such as the Meos who have been active on the Plain of Jars.

Its operations extend into northeast Burma, China's Yunnan Province, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand — all part of the guerrilla war fought by both Communist and anti-Communist forces for many years in this part of the world.

For example, Haw tribal agents working for the Central Intelligence Agency Cross into South China from Laos and Black Thai tribesmen cross into North Vietnam from Laos.

These tribes live on both sides of the borders, the Haw in northern Laos and Yunnan, the Black Thai in Laos' Sam Neua Province and North Vietnam's Dien Bien Phu Province, making their detection difficult.

The pro-American guerrillas

have killed Communist leaders, destroyed key links in Communist communications and logistics and, tied down large numbers of Communist soldiers in defensive actions.

In Laos the secret army has wiped out Communist headquarters and taken over prison camps and rescued inmates.

On one occasion in South Laos, a guerrilla group in one night operation wiped out a prison camp controlled by Pathet Lao guards and rescued 59 prisoners, crossing back into Thailand before the Communists could strike back.

The Thai force at Long Chien, which helped yesterday to clear a ridge overlooking the base, may be listed as the secret army's latest success.

About 1,000 Thais were reported yesterday to have joined Gen. Vang Pao's army of Meo tribesmen at Long Chien. Reports from the area today said a North Vietnamese attack was beaten back and some positions previously lost to the Communists had been retaken.

Thais have long operated in Laos. In February, 1967, reporters saw Thai commandos at Nam Bac, a Lao government base 60 miles north of

the royal capital of Luang Prabang, not far from the Hanoi-Peking borders.

The Thais stood out like a sore thumb for they spoke in a Bangkok dialect.

When questioned closely they admitted they were from the Thai military.

The secret army operations in Southeast Asia are directed by small groups of efficient Americans working out of offices under cover of organizations in various cities in the region.

Laos, bordering on all the Southeast Asia nations, is ideal for these U.S. operations. And the secret army concept fits neatly into the Guam doctrine.

Americans take care of the leadership, training, planning and logistics. The Asians do the bulk of the fighting.

STATINTL

CIA base crushed by Lao patriots

Daily World Foreign Department

Sam Thong, the U.S. CIA base in Laos 75 miles north of the capital of Vientiane, has been put to the torch by Lao Patriotic Front forces, according to U.S. sources in Vientiane yesterday. The sources said a helicopter from the CIA-run "Air America" line observed the scene on Sunday but left when it met ground fire from LPF units.

Long Cheng, sister base to Sam Thong only six miles away in northern Laos, has become the focal point for an international political controversy with farcical overtones. U.S. newsmen last week reported that Long Cheng was being reinforced by Thai mercenaries and other Thai troops flown in from neighboring Thailand in the CIA's "Air America" planes.

Both the Laos government in Vientiane and the Thai government officially denied these reports.

"There are no Thai troops in Laos," the Vientiane government declared.

But on Friday, White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said there were indeed Thai troops in Laos, although he wat-

ered this down somewhat by adding that Thai involvement was "very limited."

On Saturday, President Richard Nixon confirmed the earlier statements of Ziegler that Thai troops were in Laos. Nixon said: "The Thai interest in Laos... in attempting to sustain the neutralist government... has been known for many years."

Nixon also tried to connect this Thai violation of the 1962 Geneva Agreement on Laos with a request for aid from the Laos government to Thailand. But the 1962 agreement prohibits such "requests."

Sources in Vientiane, meanwhile, said that large numbers of Thai soldiers (of Lao minority origin) had suddenly resigned from the Thai Second Army and

had been immediately hired by the U.S. CIA and then airlifted into Long Cheng in Laos. The sources said two entire Thai battalions (1,000 men) were involved.

If this politically-embarrassing incident makes anything clear, it certainly is the fact that the U.S. is in complete command of the "Royal Lao" and Thai armies and does not even bother to inform Bangkok or Vientiane of what it is doing with them.

In Cambodia, General Lon Nol, who was granted "full power" last Wednesday by his National Assembly, said in a statement Sunday: "The time of repression, of dictatorship, is finished." Gen. Lon and the Cambodian military are in control of Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital.



International

'Limits to interven

By TOM FOLEY

An article in the first quarter (January, 1970) issue of Foreign Affairs, called "Limits to Intervention," calls for a sharp cutback in U.S. military intervention policies abroad and also advocates that the Nixon administration should reduce U.S. non-nuclear armed forces "to levels that characterized the Eisenhower period" of the 1950s.

Foreign Affairs is widely regarded, both here and abroad, as the foreign policy organ of an important part of the U.S. capitalist class.

The positions of the three authors of the article would support that view: Graham T. Allison, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense in 1965; Ernest R. May, Dean of Harvard College; and Adam Yarmolinsky, former special assistant to the Defense Secretary, 1961-64, and Deputy Asst. Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (CIA Liaison), 1965-66.

The authors show real concern about the "uncertainty, confusion and discontent" created by U.S. intervention in Vietnam. They note that the "broad bipartisan consensus" which characterized the Cold War period in the U.S. has been replaced by "widespread, bipartisan confusion... the expenditure of blood and treasure in Viet Nam has deepened fundamental doubts throughout our society... as to whether the U.S. should in any circumstances become involved again in a limited war."

Policy re-examination asked

In their words, the authors try to identify three types of cases where the question of U.S. armed intervention would be raised: "(1) overt aggression by a major communist power against a U.S. ally; (2) overt aggression by any state against a nation not a U.S. ally; (3) internal violence jeopardizing a friendly state, perhaps aided from outside."

In all three cases, the authors urge a policy of caution and restraint. The first category, they say, is covered by existing treaties (NATO, SEATO), but "all such commitments deserve thoughtful re-examination."

The President, in consultation with the Senate, should review all existing treaty commitments, and only in regard to those which require reaffirmation, the President should announce "a presumption

half of an ally which is the victim of overt aggression."

In effect, the authors are calling for the weeding out of all "commitments" which are not absolutely vital to U.S. capitalism's survival.

In the second category, the authors say "there should be a presumption against U.S. intervention." (Emphasis in the original - T.F.). Only in cases where other major powers, or better, the other major power is involved, should there be any question. This is an argument, on a very practical basis, against the U.S. acting as a "world gendarme" against revolt everywhere.

"Internal disorder," the third category, is discussed at some length by the authors, with a focus on Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. They say: "the administration should make a serious effort to establish a strong presumption against intervention, in cases of internal disorder and/or subversion, even when there is outside encouragement or aid." (Original emphasis - T.F.).

The authors adopt this point of view from the following considerations: whether the U.S. will or will not intervene is likely to be only one factor in the decision of people to revolt; the factors which produce revolt are "overwhelmingly local"; also, reduced U.S. intervention would encourage "flabby" local regimes to set their own houses in order, and this "disorder" is often what produces revolt in the first place.

A different problem is the role of various U.S. government agencies (Pentagon, CIA, State Dept., etc.) in evaluating a situation. The authors strongly argue for "institutional ways to guarantee competition," i.e., that not only CIA data is used to the exclusion of all else in determining intervention.

As an illustration of what they mean, the authors take Thailand. They write: "There can be no question that adoption of a presumption against automatic defense of Thailand (by the U.S.) would arouse anguished and determined resistance..."

"Virtually all Asian hands in Washington would not only attempt to prevent such a change, but would, for a long time afterward, make every effort to bring before the President evidence which would support the status quo policy. Some might even contrive situations showing him the error of his way."

This latter remark is perhaps one of the most revealing in the whole article. It shows some of the more sordid problems before the U.S. ruling class. The authors argue, not very convincingly, that the President can make U.S. policies "unmistakably clear" to the CIA, the Pentagon, and other outfits, and these agencies will toe the line.

The article as a whole reveals a tendency in certain sectors of the U.S. capitalist class to at least recognize problems and dangers involved in trying to rule the world. It would seem that they are aware that the previous policy of "open-ended" commitments everywhere simply is no longer possible, given the balance of forces in the world today.

But the article also shows an awareness that empires founded on military power tend to produce "barracks emperors."

NASHVILLE, TENN.
TENNESSEAN

MAR 24 1970
M - 141,842
S - 234,036

Who's Where When in Laos?

SINCE serious debate on United States involvement in Laos began, the Nixon administration's response has been one of more confusion than clarity.

On the matter of casualties, President Nixon first said that "no American" had ever been killed in ground combat action there. Then an Army captain was named as a casualty. Then the White House recounted and found "27" civilian and military dead. Then recounted again and found "less than 50."

The latest reports indicate that the Central Intelligence Agency, the Army, the Agency for International Development and even some troops from Thailand are involved in defense of a Laotian base at Long Chen.

American Special Forces teams apparently are training Meo tribesmen as guerillas and other Americans are flying as aerial intelligence observers.

Although Mr. Nixon has talked of a policy of disengagement in Asia, the casualty and activity reports indicate a serious, and possibly deepening, engagement in Laos.

Mr. Nixon has "explained" the U.S. role in Laos once, but since then the public has needed a scorecard to tell who was where when. It may soon be time for another explanation.

Writer Suspects CIA in Cambodia

STATINTL

(Chronicle correspondent Lisa Hobbs recently completed an assignment in Cambodia, where she had several candid talks with Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the deposed chief of state.)

By Lisa Hobbs
Chronicle Foreign Service

It has become part of American folklore to suspect the enthusiastic, if clandestine, presence of the Central Intelligence Agency whenever a Southeast Asian government rises or falls.

The overthrow of Prince Norodom Sihanouk and his neutralist government last week might well justify this now customary suspicion.

There is no known evidence that the CIA played any role in the Phnom Penh coup. But the suspicion exists, at least in this writer's mind. Such was Sihanouk's personal popularity that any attempt by his political rivals to depose him would have necessitated foreign support.

REASON

If the CIA were involved, what would have been the rationale? Perhaps it had its genesis in an attitude that the prince expressed to me during a private two-hour interview at his Phnom Penh villa last summer.

"If the Americans withdraw from Southeast Asia, Cambodia can no longer survive as an independent nation," he said. "And, as Khmers, we would prefer the Chinese to the Vietnamese."

Later, the prince spoke of the inevitability of a final Communist takeover of all Vietnam.

The prince was positing a situation that would be intolerable to American Asian policy.

News Analysis

under Communist control and Cambodia ruled from Peking, it would be only a matter of time before the American presence would be squeezed out of Thailand.

DANGER

The prince spoke repeatedly of Cambodia being "in perpetual danger" from the Thais in the west and the Vietnamese in the east. Yet it was clear that the prince envisioned no situation that could cause him to relinquish his neutrality by seeking American military aid in the form of combatants.

"Americans should leave Vietnam but stay in all countries that accept their presence. There is no lack of countries like that: they need the U.S. dollar. We are poor but have our pride."

But pride, it seems, was not enough to stay the accelerating internal and external pressures. These pressures sprang from three main sources — the Army which, living on coolie level, has not had a raise in pay since 1954; the politically powerful and personally wealthy rightists within the Sangkum, the ruling party; the increasing political and economic instability throughout Southeast Asia.

CRITICAL

Within the last few weeks, U. S. domestic awareness of American involvement in Laos had reached a peak. Cambodia, sharing borders

with Laos as well as with Thailand and South Vietnam, became overnight a critical strategic prize. In view of the Laotian situation, her neutralist stance might well have become untenable to the three powers that have lusted after her possession for many years.

The die was cast when the

prince left for Paris. In a swift and apparently well-planned maneuver, the government fell into the hands of the pro-American rightists. The prince, long a thorn in the side of U. S. policy-makers, was out.

Was the CIA standing in the wings directing this intriguing little Asian drama? There is no proof. However, the agency puts in such long hours plotting and planning all over Asia it should be given a little credit on the basis of the probable.

STATINTL

TROY, N.Y.
TIMES RECORD

E - 42,181

MAR 24 1970

Critics At Work

The critics of American foreign policy and activity, both in Congress and in the country at large, are endeavoring to make a prime case of the fact that CIA agents and some service volunteers are assisting the Laotian army build up a machine to resist Communist invasion.

The unfairness of the criticism is magnified by the fact that it is so one sided. Whatever the United States does is horrible. Americans miss no opportunity to picture their country as an ogre. The other side is a matter to be overlooked.

Russia has at least 4,000 "technicians" helping the Arab countries. She has thousands in North Vietnam. They are scattered throughout Africa. France and England have similar representatives, not in the same numbers, but none the less there.

But because the United States has a few hundred men willing to help a beleaguered country fend off a Communist invasion, we are a threat to world peace. Someone is being misled, and unfortunately so.

Entangling foreign alliances were part of George Washington's parting warning. He spoke at a time when world communication was almost non-existent. Today there is no vast separation of countries. The most distant are only hours away. There are times when the strong must play a rôle according to that biblical quotation. They cannot avoid being their brother's keeper.

1,000 Thais Reinforce Lao Troops

By TAMMY ARBUCKLE
Special to The Star

VIENTIANE—American Special Forces officers working for the Central Intelligence Agency are leading 1,000 Thai soldiers reinforcing Gen. Vang Pao's Meo troops defending Long Chien, Lao military sources said today.

The Americans are newly assigned, but the sources said the Thais saw action last year at Xieng Khouang on the Plain of Jars.

The Thai group is not permanently assigned to Laos, but enters periodically under a contract with the Lao government.

Lao Premier Souvanna Phouma's denial over the weekend of the Thai entry of Laos was technically correct, sources said, because the new contract for Long Chien had not yet been signed.

About 800 Thais already have arrived in the Long Chien area and the remaining 200 are en route.

Two Thai artillery batteries of four guns each also have arrived at Long Chien, plus Thai security troops for the guns.

Flown in by U.S.

The Thais arrive in American aircraft and are dressed in civilian clothes. On arrival they are issued Lao army uniforms, Lao identity papers and paybooks.

Many of the Thais are regular officers of the royal Thai army serving in Laos with full knowledge of Thailand and continue to receive their full salary from the Thai government. Considered on temporary detachment from the Thai army, they also receive a Lao salary paid from U.S. funds as an additional incentive.

These Thais are mostly natives of northeastern Thailand, near the Lao border, and are therefore fluent Lao speakers. The Thais are experienced forest fighters and some were trained in South Vietnam near Vung Tau, northeast of Saigon, sources said.

They are not the only Thai forces serving in Laos. Thai air force pilots fly transports belonging to the Central Intelligence Agency-contracted airline, Continental Airlines, and for an airline in south Laos.

One of the Thais, Lt. Col. Kru of the 1st Thai Air Wing at Don Muang, was killed in a crash at Long Chien recently.

Sporadic patrol clashes were reported today around Long Chien, the main base for the U.S.-supported "Secret Army" of Meo tribesmen led by Gen. Vang Pao. Long Chien is about 75 miles north of Vientiane.

Edgar (Pop) Buell, the American AID co-ordinator for the region, said that between 80,000 and 100,000 Meos are walking out of the Long Chien area as refugees.

Buell, who has been in Laos for about 10 years, most of the time working with the Meos, said he did not believe the fall of

Long Chien to the North Vietnamese would finish Vang Pao's guerrillas, the major force fighting the Communists.

Buell said he thought Vang Pao, with the help of Lao Theung tribes from the lower mountain slopes, would be able to hold new defense lines.

Communist units, meanwhile, were reported assembling west of the neutralist headquarters at Vang Vieng, 100 miles north of Vientiane.

Sources said about 650 Communist troops are some 12,000 yards from the west edge of Vang Vieng. The mission of these troops is believed to be the preparation of supply caches for the troops currently attacking Long Chien.

Failure of the royal Lao army to reinforce the Meo guerrillas of Vang Pao is believed behind the use of the Thais at Long Chien. Ethnic Lao troops, whether on the side of the North Vietnamese or against them, have not proved reliable fighters. This led to the formation of Vang Pao's Secret Army, trained and equipped by the U.S.

But the Secret Army also has its drawbacks.

Americans engaged in its operations have told of being left alone in the forest when their guerrillas fled under attack.

They say some Secret Army

men are more interested in the better-than-average pay than doing the job.

Guerrilla leaders at the local level have stolen U.S. funds and equipment meant for operations. Some soldiers, especially the Thais, well-informed sources say, "talk too much to their girl friends" about their exploits, real or imagined.

More important, however, Secret Army critics charge its central intelligence agency bosses make policy. It is alleged that the CIA and U.S. military advisers persuaded Vang Pao to "tweak the tiger's tail" by taking the Plain of Jars last year and offering Thai support as the tool to accomplish this.

and the Thais have pinned down one North Vietnamese Division, Hanoi's 316th, in Laos for nearly eight years.

Now it is pinning down a second division, the 312th, as well as two supply regiments and two North Vietnamese border regiments.

Over 15,000 North Vietnamese have died in northern Laos since 1962. If it had not been for these U.S.-led operations in Laos, the Hanoi troops might have been used in South Vietnam.

Because the Geneva accords forbid paramilitary forces in Laos, these U.S.-Thai operations have remained secret. The Communists know about these

operations, however, and President Nixon told of some of them March 6. U.S. Embassy officials here say secrecy must remain.

"The President's speech represents a stage, not a point of departure for us" to say more, an embassy official said.

He compared the government's Geneva accords policy to a man hanging to a ledge with the press climbing up his legs asking what's on the ledge.

Officials seem to cling to the Geneva accords as more important than any credibility gap caused by secrecy. Said a Lao-tian, "You can't go to Long Chien today because some Thais are still in their civilian clothes."

STATINTL

Green Berets Lead Thai Unit In Laos Action

By TAMMY ARBUCKLE
Special to The Star

VIENTIANE—American Special Forces officers working for the Central Intelligence Agency are leading 1,000 Thai soldiers reinforcing Gen. Vang Pao's Meo troops defending Long Chien, Lao military sources said today.

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Killed in Crash

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Feels Lines Will Hold

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Analysis

History Tempers U.S. Laos Role

By PETER J. KUMPA
[Sun Staff Correspondent]

Vientiane, Laos, March 22—The American effort to keep the neutralist government of Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma from succumbing to Communist aggression in Laos has been tailored to avoid the mistakes of Vietnam.

No United States ground forces are being used. Laotian government armies are being supplied, advised and trained by a minimum number of Americans, many of them in civilian guise from the Central Intelligence Agency or under contract and using such covers as the Agency for International Development program.

Reduction Of Supplies

From 1964 on, air power was directed both at the Ho Chi Minh Trail and in northern Laos. Air strikes were launched from South Vietnam, Thailand and the 7th fleet in the South China Sea.

The aim on the trail was simple—to reduce the flow of North Vietnamese troops and supplies flowing into South Vietnam. In northern Laos, it was similarly designed to reduce the number of men that Hanoi could keep operative to threaten the military and political balance in Laos.

In both countries, the Americans have learned that while air power can punish an enemy, inflicting damage and casualties, it cannot interdict a determined foe without ground forces. The North Vietnamese have not been stopped.

Fears Seem Unjustified

Unlike South Vietnam, the United States is not in any deep morass in Laos. There are no large bases or concentrations of men. There are military supplies, that can be quickly turned over to the Laotian government or destroyed. Air strikes can be turned off by pushing a button.

Thus, congressional fears that the United States might get bogged down militarily here seem unjustified.

There is nothing visible in any part of Laos that could keep

Americans here if a decision were given to pull back. "We can get out in 24 hours if we have to," said one key American. Others echo these views.

But the Laotian operation, put together in the Kennedy administration, then increased in the Johnson years and continued by the Nixon government, has incurred some moral responsibilities.

Purely American Effort

On a smaller scale, the Americans are responsible for the clandestine army of Gen. Vang Pao, the head of the Meo guerrilla movement. This has been a purely American effort, performed skillfully and secretly by the Central Intelligence Agency though under the political direction of the State Department.

General Vang is now battling to hold Long Cheng, his headquarters and capital of his mountain empire. He is also fighting for the very existence of his army, which is losing its morale and its men. His leadership and perhaps his very life are at stake. Doesn't the United States owe something to him and his nomadic hill people who have fought the North Vietnamese and the communist Pathet Lao in a remarkable and mainly successful behind-the-lines guerrilla war? Can the American government permit the Mess to be annihilated now?

Moral, Legal Obligation

The United States also has a moral if not legal obligation to continue to support within limits, the Souvanna Phouma government until international agreement or a more local agreement by the contending Laotian parties brings peace and some stability here.

The Nixon Doctrine, which calls for a reduction of American military power in Southeast Asia, does appear to discard one of the better trumps the United States used in the past to limit Communist advances. The Kennedy administration could and did send marines across the Mekong River to the nearby Thai base at Udorn. The inference was

plain; American ground troops, and Thais as well, would be used if the North Vietnamese attempted a total takeover of the country.

With such a threat no longer plausible, congressional fears about turning Laos into another Vietnam appear to be equally groundless.

Threat Remains

The threat of heavy Thai intervention does remain. As this presumably would be backed by American air might and other logistic support, it may be just as chilling a consideration for Hanoi.

There is a prima facie case to be made on the other hand that it was the Nixon administration that increased the level of fighting during the past few months by escalating the numbers and the type of air attacks upon the Communists in northern Laos.

The original American escalation was made in October, 1968, when the bombing of North Vietnam was halted and targets were made available in Laos.

President Nixon, in his March 6 statement on Laos, claimed the increased level of American aid operations was due only to the "massive" intervention of additional North Vietnamese troops. He said 13,000 Communist troops had been poured into Laos, raising their total to 67,000 men.

If there was any such escalation by Hanoi, it was not known by the American mission here.

"Massive" Intervention

In an embarrassing lack of coordination, briefers here still were using the 50,000 figure as an estimate for North Vietnamese forces in Laos.

Intelligence sources here contended that they could find no significant change in North Vietnamese strength in Laos over the past year.

Even the 50,000 figure is considered inflated by other Western sources. French estimates place the figure for North Vietnamese at more than 44,500.

Fuzzy Estimates

Western diplomats here feel that the Nixon administration

took considerable liberties with some fuzzy estimates and raised them to excuse a vast jump in the number of American air sorties and in at least one case the use of giant B-52 bombers. They feel the United States could have justified its elevation of air power by acknowledging the weakness of Laotian government opposition (politically undesirable) or by pointing out the vastly increased firepower now being employed by the North Vietnamese. The Communist forces now use rockets, the full range of Chinese-made automatic weapons, considerable artillery and large numbers of truck and other wheeled transport.

Mr. Nixon's figures for past North Vietnamese strength in Laos also seem to have been toyed with, and are lower than those provided at the time in 1967. The net effect makes Hanoi appear as the party that has been the one to blame for rapid escalation of the war in Laos when it seems closer to fact to say that the Communists have kept a rather substantial force in the country.

Using only official figures, one can conclude that there has been a considerable increase in the size of the American effort in Laos. The President's March 6 statement listed 616 Americans directly employed here and another 424 Americans working on government contracts for a grand total of 1,040 Americans.

But in October, official State Department figures showed 330 Americans on contract and 500 directly on the government payrolls. This makes a total of 830

men. Has the Nixon administration pumped in more than 200 extra men for the Laotian effort during the past few months? Perhaps, but more likely not. The best guess here is that the State Department figures of last fall were deliberately undervalued to keep the cover on a number of secret operations.

Mr. Nixon's own figures are undoubtedly a little low. For while he talks of Americans employed "in Laos," he says nothing about other Americans, largely intelligence men but also some contract pilots, who live in and work out of nearby Thailand.

continued

BALTIMORE, MD.

SUN

M - 180,656

E - 209,655

S - 347,939

MAR 23 1970

Questions in Laos

The report in *The Sun* today of participation by the Central Intelligence Agency in the defense of the Long Chen Base in Laos is disturbingly familiar. Before the 1965 buildup of United States troops in South Vietnam the CIA was deeply involved there against the Vietcong. CIA activities against the Pathet Lao—which has included the training and equipping of a guerrilla army of Meo tribesmen—may not be directly responsible for the present deteriorating situation in Laos, but they certainly have contributed to it.

The conflict in Laos is already following a pattern similar to what occurred in South Vietnam. The United States is there, making war from the air and through its clandestine agents on the ground. The number of participants is even growing: Thailand has sent an expeditionary force, and North Vietnamese troops are camped on the Plain of Jars. The conflict is thoroughly internationalized.

The parallel between Vietnam and Laos, however, is not predetermined. We are assured by *The Sun's* Peter Kumpa that the Nixon administration can avoid the mistakes President Johnson made in South Vietnam, mainly because of public opinion in the United States. Also the attitude of Congress is such that commitment of United States ground forces is something Mr. Nixon could just not get away with.

That may be true, but no one can be sure and we are left with the uneasy feeling that all this has happened before. President Johnson accepted and acted upon faulty intelligence in Vietnam. Is the advice Mr. Nixon receives superior? We suspect CIA agents and Pentagon functionaries in Vietnam have made large decisions on their own that should only have been made by elected civilians in Washington. Does Mr. Nixon really have an accurate picture of what is occurring in Laos? Is he really in control of events? Who can, with certainty, answer these questions affirmatively?

grams to teach critically needed skills. Thus, we can provide students with much-needed skills in fields in which they can establish careers. This is a most significant endeavor for the future of our country and its educational institutions. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this valuable program.

SITUATION IN GREECE

HON. DON EDWARDS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 1970

Mr. EDWARDS of California. Mr. Speaker, the situation in Greece seems to be worsening every day. Not only are more and more individuals suffering the barbarism of a government which uses torture to keep its citizens in line, but the country which was the first democracy and remained a symbol to the free world for years, under the reign of the junta is turning more and more toward the East and away from the principles of freedom. I request that two articles which appeared in the most recent issue of News of Greece be included in the Record. The first is the preface from a new book by James Becket, "Barbarism in Greece," whose report for Amnesty International was the first comprehensive account of the use of torture by the Greek junta. The second describes the growing alliance of the junta with the Eastern European countries, while still enjoying a great deal of military support from the United States. How can the United States, in good conscience, still continue its support for such a government?

The articles follow:

BARBARISM IN GREECE

The subject of this book is horrible. Torture belongs on the darkest side of human behavior, yet in the Greek case there are entries to be made on the credit side of the human ledger. People outside of Greece, especially in Europe, have cared about what was going on, and public opinion has played a role. The European Press has vigorously pursued the subject. The international community through its organizations has shown that it is willing to try to do something about it. The Scandinavian governments brought their case before the European Commission of Human Rights not for any commercial or territorial advantage, but because they believed in human rights. Despite pressure from many sides, they had the perseverance to see the case through to its conclusion. The members of the Commission conscientiously discharged their duty, concluding that the Greek regime tortures political prisoners as a matter of policy. Most important of all, Greeks themselves, at great personal sacrifice, had the courage to tell their stories and give their names.

I am convinced that because of this fewer Greeks have been tortured than would have been if the regime had a free hand. Efforts from abroad, however, have their limits, which are tragically demonstrated by the fact the regime continues to torture prisoners. In a sense the possible international effort has now been made, and torture has not been stopped. The future is uncertain. All that has happened, all that is described in these pages cannot be simply forgotten by Greeks.

If there is not a change soon, it is difficult to see how Greece can avoid great bloodshed.

GREECE AND THE WORLD: JUNTA TURNS EAST

Relations between the colonels and their Communist neighbors have always been based on expediency, rather than on the ringing denunciations of "communism" and "fascism" which the two parties have uttered for public consumption. They have become especially close in the past year, as both have been estranged from the West European democracies by the objections of the latter to torture in Greece and the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Two recent developments are especially striking. One is the conclusion of a new economic agreement with the U.S.S.R., under which Soviet exports to Greece are to be stepped up and receive most-favored-nation treatment. At the same time, the Soviet Union is to send technicians to the area north of Kavalla to look for peat (and according to some reports other minerals) and prepare plans for electric production based on it. Greece is to pay for this survey with some of its perennially surplus tobacco. From the Soviet point of view, however, one cigaret might seem an adequate recompense. For the area in question is the site of major American top-secret radar installations. And the Soviet technicians, hunting for minerals with the aid of modern electronic devices, might reasonably be expected to discover other things as well.

The second development is the resumption of trade with Albania for the first time since the end of World War II. The announcement of this agreement between the junta and Communist China's only satellite does not specify what commodities are involved. An appropriate exchange, however, might give Greece a supply of the little red book of Mao's thoughts in return for an equal quantity of the book in which Papadopoulos has embalmed his commentaries.

The junta has also decided to station a permanent trade representative in East Germany, while agreeing to increase its trade with Bulgaria. And Hungary has sent a trade delegation to Athens in connection with the holding of a "Hungarian Festival" there—at a time when the intellectual and artistic world of democratic countries is engaged in a cultural boycott of the Greek dictatorship. "Agreement in principle" has also reportedly been reached on a trade pact with Peking.

The junta will certainly find itself more at home ideologically with the Eastern dictatorships than with the democracies which just chased it out of the Council of Europe. Yet in the present state of the world Papadopoulos may soon find himself faced with the necessity of making an agonizing choice between Moscow and Peking: "Under which king, Bezonian? Speak or die!"

MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN—HOW LONG?

HON. WILLIAM J. SCHERLE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 1970

Mr. SCHERLE. Mr. Speaker, a child asks: "Where is daddy?" A mother asks: "How is my son?" A wife asks: "Is my husband alive or dead?"

Communist North Vietnam is sadistically practicing spiritual and mental genocide on over 1,400 American prisoners of war and their families.

How long?

IN MR. NIXON'S SILENCES IS A SHADOW OF A DOUBT

HON. HENRY HELSTOSKI

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 1970

Mr. HELSTOSKI. Mr. Speaker, it appears that we have another credibility gap on our hands. This time as it relates to Laos.

It is well spelled out in the following column by Mr. Stuart H. Loory as carried in the Record of Hackensack, N.J., on March 12, 1970:

IN MR. NIXON'S SILENCES IS A SHADOW OF A DOUBT

(By Stuart H. Loory)

Now President Nixon has bared some—but certainly not all—of the secrets of the clandestine war in Laos he inherited from two previous administrations. The United States, he openly admits, is neck deep in a part of the southeast Asia jungle war outside Vietnam.

In six years of fighting, 400 American airmen have become casualties, 400 airplanes have been lost—about as many as, maybe even more, than the number of fixed-wing airplanes the United States has lost over South Vietnam.

These facts emerged from the torpid calm of the Southern White House—the Key Biscayne, Fla., vacation retreat to which the President retired late last week to make his Laos statement.

Why not speak from Washington? If Mr. Nixon wanted to be completely candid, why not make the statement at a news conference where his words and intentions could really be probed and clarified?

Unfortunately, Mr. Nixon's statement on Laos was a politically reflexive reaction to a growing clamor for candor in the White House. It was intended to break the silence that has surrounded the secret war, to show that the nation harbors no secret guilt. But it was only half candid; and so it was wholly unsatisfactory.

The unhappy experience with the Gulf of Tonkin resolution of August 1964, originally presented as a show of solidarity behind President Lyndon B. Johnson but then construed by him as a virtual declaration of war, has taught Congress and the American people to read words carefully. The presentation of selected facts by the Johnson administration to bolster its case for the massive intervention in South Vietnam in 1965 has cautioned the American people to check and double-check on a President's facts.

And so, when Mr. Nixon says of Laos, "We have no plans for introducing combat forces into Laos," one must look for the loopholes like a Philadelphia lawyer.

No plans? Does that mean plans may be developed later? Maybe.

Ground combat forces? Does that mean more ground combat support forces—engineers to build roads and bridges, suppliers to carry ammunition to combat troops, repairmen to fix disabled weapons, advisers to aim and show the Laotians how to fire the weapons—might be dispatched?

Ground combat forces? What about escalating the American involvement through the introduction of more aircraft to fly cover for the CIA-trained and supplied Laotian forces as well as the Royal Laotian Army?

The President said: "The levels of our assistance have risen in response to the growth of North Vietnamese combat activities."

The clear implication of that sentence is

E - 93,538
MAR 23 1970

CIA's secret role in the secret

war

By MICHAEL KRAFT
Reuters News Service

WASHINGTON — Congressional critics of American involvement in Laos are showing increasing interest in the part being played by the Central Intelligence Agency and what they consider the unusual role of the U.S. ambassador.

According to Sen. Stuart Symington, (D., Mo.) Ambassador McMurtre Godley operates in Vientiane, the Laotian capital, as a sort of pro-consul, directing American military and intelligence activities in addition to his normal diplomatic functions.

Sen. William Fulbright (D., Ark.) zeroed in on a press report that the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) in Laos is a cover for C.I.A. men, declaring that if true "it is another sign that we are in over our heads."

Though President Nixon has adopted a new policy of frank disclosure of all casualties and air losses in Laos and has given a 4,000-word explanation of American policy, he has never mentioned the super-secret C.I.A.

But Laos has been known for years as an "agency country," and C.I.A. men are suspected of accounting for a large proportion of the 643 Americans acknowledged by Nixon to be engaged in a military advisory and logistical support role.

The U.S. operation in Laos is directed by two men who supervised a similar U.S. support program in the Congo in the 1960's.

Godley, now 52, was ambassador in the Congo from 1964 to 1966, a time when the U.S. was providing equipment and tactical air support for the central Congolese government's campaign against the leftist Simba rebels.

The C.I.A. operations in the Congo were directed by Lawrence Devlin, now a political officer in the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane but described in official documents as the chief of the C.I.A. mission.

The Congolese air force was supplied with reconditioned U.S. twin-engine B-26 bombers and single-engine T-28s that were flown by Cuban and East European exiles against the rebels in the eastern

Mauldin

Congo. Correspondents who were there at the time say the C.I.A.'s role was an open secret.

The American assistance was regarded as an important factor in helping the Congo government suppress the rebellion, with the help of white mercenary soldiers.

In response to congressional inquiries, the Nixon Administration has asserted that it is merely a coincidence that both Godley and Devlin are now assigned to Laos.

Godley was assailed on the Senate floor recently by Symington, one of the most vocal critics of both the Laotian involvement and the administration secrecy about it.

Symington has been rebuffed by the State Department in his demand for the ambassador's immediate recall to testify before Congress.

Fulbright also wants to bring the ambassador home and sent a letter to the State Department backing the recall demand.

Press reports have said there are hundreds of C.I.A. agents in Laos, and Fulbright told a reporter he thought the agency's operations there were costing between \$200 million and \$300 million a year.

Silver fleets of aircraft on charter to the C.I.A. are said to have been providing tactical support for years to Gen. Van Pao's pro-government force of Meo tribesmen.

Three Air America employees were among six civilian fatalities acknowledged by the State Department to have occurred in Laos in the past year.

One of the victims, J. C. Merkel, was killed by a bullet when piloting a helicopter over the Plain of Jars last month — during the Communist offensive that recaptured the strategic area.

According to press accounts cited by members of the Senate, Green Berets and other army veterans now technically civilians have been operating under contract to the C.I.A. in Laos.

The agency is also alleged to have financed air operations, including transportation, and some tactical support for the pro-government neutralist forces against the Communists.

Single-engine Laotian T-28 fighters are serviced by American mechanics, although the combat flying has been done by Laotians and other non-Americans, the reports say.



De-escalation

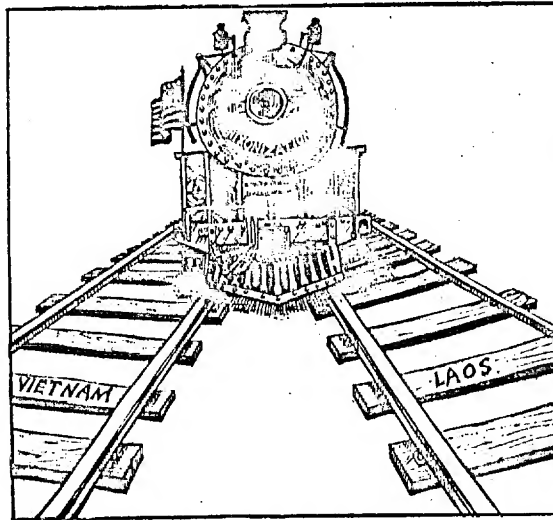
STATINTL

THE WAR IN VIETNAM



Let Me Make Everything Perfectly Clear

Pierotti—N.Y. Post



Szep—Boston Globe



Withdrawal

Jeason—Chicago Daily News

LAOS: PLAIN (AND FANCY) TALK

In the scruffy little capital of Vientiane last week, the bars and cabarets were as merry as usual. A few miles outside town, a \$50,000 Olympic swimming pool for U.S. Government employees was nearing completion. And everywhere the Laotians continued their languid pace of life. Most of the time, it was difficult to believe that Laos was the locus of a mounting international crisis. Yet, events in that little Southeast Asian kingdom clearly presented the Nixon Administration with some painful problems. Not the least was how the Nixon Doctrine—with its principle that the U.S. should avoid committing ground troops to other nations' internal wars—would work in its first crucial test. Of equal importance was the possibility that the situation in Laos might saddle Mr. Nixon with the kind of credibility gap that afflicted his predecessor in the White House.

It was ironic that Laos was the country to raise such large issues. For years, the seesaw skirmishing in Laos has been regarded in Washington as a sideshow war, something to be settled after the blood-letting in Vietnam came to an end. ("The situation in Laos is disastrous but not serious," went the old Washington quip.) But since the start of the year, the North Vietnamese, along with their local Communist allies the Pathet Lao, have put a different cast on things. Mounting a major offensive, they swept the U.S.-backed Laotian Government forces from the Plain of Jars and by last week threatened both Vientiane and the royal capital of Luang Prabang. For the first time since the 1962 Geneva conference "settled" the Laotian problem, the Communists seemed intent not only on regaining lost ground but on converting their undeniable military superiority into solid political gains.

This, in the dove-cote in Washington. Two weeks

ago, in fact, Mr. Nixon tried to head off Congressional critics who maintain that he is leading the U.S. down the road to another Vietnam. In a carefully wrought policy statement issued from Key Biscayne, the President admitted for the first time that the U.S. was not only bombing the Ho Chi Minh Trail but also flying air support missions for Laotian ground forces. But he steadfastly insisted that "there are no American ground combat troops in Laos" and that "no American stationed in Laos has ever been killed in ground combat operations."

Distinction: The evasiveness of the President's language soon became clear when The Los Angeles Times reported that a U.S. Army captain named Joseph Bush had in fact lost his life during a battle in Laos. An American adviser to Laotian Government troops, Captain Bush was killed in February 1969 fighting off a North Vietnamese attack on his compound. But when the incident was called to the attention of the White House, embarrassed spokesmen would say only that the President stood by his statement. Captain Bush had not been killed in a "ground combat operation," it was explained, but had died as a result of "hostile action"—a distinction that left many Americans unconvinced.

Inevitably, the episode cast doubt on Mr. Nixon's candor. And so last week, in the aftermath of the Captain Bush story, the White House went out of its way to salvage its credibility on Laos. First, spokesmen said that the President had not known about Captain Bush at the time of his policy statement. In addition to Captain Bush, it was then added, at least 26 U.S. "civilians" (most of them presumably CIA agents working with the Laotians) have been killed by the enemy on the ground in Laos. Earlier, the American dead, captured and missing—

both in the air and on the ground—at about 400.

In line with this new candor, the Administration added that, in the future, casualties in Laos would be made public as they occur. It also revealed that U.S. servicemen stationed in Laos (as advisers, technicians or attachés) have been receiving "hostile-fire pay" for some time past.

But even this effort at forthrightness hardly yielded the whole truth about the U.S. involvement in Laos. For one thing, military sources admitted that the figures were imprecise. And they did not take into account the many Americans who have met death in Laos while on secret missions across the border from either Thailand or South Vietnam. Their operations range from trail-watching and sabotage to prisoner-snatching and an occasional murder. And it is all very hush-hush. Many of the infiltrators carry British-made weapons with silencing devices. In some cases, the soles of their army boots carry a special tread that leaves an imprint like that of the sandals worn by the Vietnamese.

Secrecy: Most, if not all, of these incursions into Laos are run by the U.S. Studies and Observation Group (SOG), which has its headquarters in a heavily guarded and rarely visited building in downtown Saigon. And there the secrecy is impressive. Reporters are strictly *non grata*, and NEWSWEEK correspondents were sternly warned last week that detailed reporting on U.S. operations across the border into Laos would be in contravention of "Ground Rule 5." This military regulation forbids the press to report on specific "intelligence activities, methods of operation or specific locations." A possible penalty for violating Ground Rule 5 is the revocation of press creden-

In view of the clandestine operations,

cont.

it was little wonder that a number of leading Congressional critics were not satisfied by the President's assurances. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, for one, repeated his charge last week that "we are up to our necks in Laos" and demanded a withdrawal of all U.S. personnel. Sen. J. William Fulbright went a good deal farther, introducing a "sense of the Senate" resolution that challenged the President's constitutional authority to commit U.S. air or ground combat troops to the fighting in Laos without Congressional approval. But Mr. Nixon had his supporters. "November's coming up and the Democrats have to have something to talk about," remarked GOP Sen. George Aiken of Vermont. And Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott scoffed: "The Democrats have failed to make an issue out of Vietnamization. Now they are desperate to build up Laos as an issue. Why, we have had more casualties in Guatemala than in Laos."

Points: Senator Scott notwithstanding, the situation in Laos held far more perils for U.S. policy than Guatemala. And the nature of some of those dangers was made plain last week when the Communists launched a diplomatic offensive. In a "peace proposal" broadcast over Radio Hanoi, the Pathet Lao offered to negotiate with the government of Premier Souvanna Phouma on what they called five basic points: a standstill cease-fire, a conference of all political parties on the establishment of a new provisional coalition government, a demilitarized zone in which the conference would be held, a mutual pledge against reprisals—and an end to U.S. "intervention and aggression" in Laos.

Following up this initiative, Prince Souphanouvong, titular head of the Pathet Lao, sent a cable to Souvanna Phouma, his half-brother, urging him to receive a personal emissary with an important message. Temporarily thrown off balance by the surprise proposal, Souvanna—though deeply mistrustful of the Communists—accepted. In the draft response prepared by Souvanna's staff, his half-brother was addressed correctly as "Son Altesse" (Your Highness). But Souvanna huffily scratched off the honorific before sending the cable: "The Prime Minister will be happy to accept Prince Souphanouvong's message, the sooner the better."

Talks: Although a Communist emissary was due to arrive in Vientiane late this week, there was considerable doubt in the Laotian capital that talks with the Communists held much promise. For Souvanna is presumably determined to preserve his control over the government, while the Communists want to establish a coalition that reflects the "new realities" of the military situation. Moreover, the Communists have demanded an end to the U.S. air strikes as a precondition for talks, and Souvanna last week insisted that the air attacks would be called off only if the North Vietnamese withdrew their troops from Laos.

"Let us not talk uniquely about aerial bombardment," said Souvanna. "The two things are tied together. In order to remove the effect of the bombing, you must remove the cause of the bombing, which is the presence of North Vietnamese troops in Laos."

The display of verbal firmness by Souvanna went down well in Washington, but it was also fully understood that the Communists were in an extremely strong bargaining position. They could, if they wanted to, overrun the entire country. And in the circumstances, it is considered conceivable that Souvanna might decide to strike a deal with the Communists, trading domestic political favors in exchange for calling on the U.S. to cease bombing the Ho Chi Minh Trail. If that



Captain Bush: A curious distinction

should happen, the Communists might well have the U.S. over a barrel, since it would be difficult to continue the bombing if Souvanna wanted it stopped. To meet such a contingency, in fact, the U.S. military has been drawing up secret plans to halt the strikes against the trail—and to make up for the loss with a saturation bombing campaign along the South Vietnamese-Laotian border, concentrating on the approximately 30 points where the terrain allows the North Vietnamese to use trucks and other heavy equipment.

How effective that would be in choking off the flow of Communist troops and equipment to South Vietnam, however, is open to considerable doubt. And should a peaceful settlement be bought in Laos at the expense of the U.S. position in Vietnam, the result would be a damaging setback for the Nixon Doctrine in its first test.

23 March 1970

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Laos: Old War, New Dispute

EXCEPT for occasional Communist patrols that stole to within a few tantalizing miles of Luangprabang and Vientiane, there was little military movement in Laos last week. Exhausted after their defeat by Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese troops on the Plain of Jars, General Vang Pao's U.S.-supported Meo guerrillas retired into their mountains to rest and regroup. Almost nothing stirred on the ground in northern Laos, except for some 20,000 Meo, many of them families of Pao's warriors, who began "walking out" of their hillside enclaves towards the Thai border and relative safety from the new Communist push that they fear will come. Edgar "Pop" Buell, U.S. aid coordinator in Laos, estimates that disease or enemy action will take 20% of the Meo refugees during their 15-day march-by-night, hide-by-day trek west.

Despite the lull, the conflict was still the object of fascination and controversy, not because of the agonies of the Laotians but because of new diplomatic maneuvering and the discomfort of the Nixon Administration. Instead of quashing congressional criticism of the U.S. role in the war, the White House's explanation of the extent and nature of the U.S. involvement in Laos has only brought on a new dispute.

The Administration's troubles began weeks ago, with news of the military reversal on the Plain of Jars. The reports provided an opening for war critics like Senator George McGovern, who seized on B-52 raids on the Plain to charge that "we are going down the same road in Laos [as in Viet Nam], and we are doing it in secret." Richard Nixon's response was swift and apparently candid. On March 6 in Key Biscayne, he outlined the U.S. role in Laos—never before admitted in detail by any Administration—as "supportive and defensive." To emphasize the "limited" nature of the U.S. role, he stated flatly that "no American stationed in Laos has ever been killed in ground combat operations." At a "backgrounder" after the Nixon speech, a White House aide said that all of some 400 Americans killed, missing or captured in six years of war in Laos had been airmen. As for "advisers," he asserted, their casualty rate "is zero."

Case closed—or so the Administration thought. It was, however, immediately and forcibly reopened. No "ground combat deaths"? The Los Angeles Times last week ran Freelance Journalist Don Schanche's eyewitness account of the death of one U.S. military adviser, Captain Joseph K. Bush Jr., during an enemy attack on a Laotian army compound in February 1969. Confronted with Schanche's story, White House aides sought safety in semantics. Nixon had been accurate, they said, when House Deputy Press Secretary Gerald

Warren Bush was "behind the lines," and therefore a victim only of "hostile enemy action"; most assuredly, Warren said, he was not on a "combat operation," or in a "combat situation," or "even in combat." Somehow, of course, Bush had won several decorations, including a posthumous Silver Star, for "gallantry in action," and, as his letters to his wife indicate (see box, page 12), he would have been the last to say that he had not been in a "combat situation."

In its eagerness to recoup the situation, the White House hurriedly revealed that at least 26 American civilians had died one way or another in the Laotian war. They included three members of the International Voluntary Service, a Peace Corps-style group supported in part by the State Department. The others worked for Air America, the CIA's Asian airline. Moving further, the President ordered U.S. commanders to report air and ground casualties incurred from hostile enemy action in the Laotian war separately from the Viet Nam totals, in which they had always been included.

Had the Administration been caught in a deception? Nixon had been genuinely unaware of the killing of Captain Bush, whose death had been lost in the intricacies of casualty bookkeeping. Nonetheless, it has long been common knowledge that Americans, military advisers and specialists, as well as civilians, have died in Laos under enemy fire. The credibility flap provided a new, irresistible opportunity for congressional critics of U.S. Asian policy. The major challenge came from J. William Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Last week, in an effort to maintain congressional control over the Laotian war, the Arkansas Democrat introduced a "sense of the Senate" resolution that the President could not employ ground—or air—forces in Laos without "affirmative action" by Congress.

A Hard Choice. A popular and congressional argument over Laos is precisely what the White House wanted to avoid. Nixon promised at Key Biscayne that there would be no commitment of U.S. ground troops to that country, but airpower is something else. A major reason that the U.S. is in Laos is to carry out bombing raids on North Vietnamese troops and supplies heading south on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Trouble on Capitol Hill could scarcely crimp the Administration's already narrow room for maneuver in Laos—a fact that Hanoi and the Pathet Lao seem to appreciate thoroughly. In an intriguing and unexpected diplomatic move, Prince Souphanouvong, the Pathet Lao leader, last week offered to negotiate with the U.S. government. Phouma, head of the neutralist gov-

ernment, a peace proposal. It suggested talks about a standstill cease-fire and a conference of all Lao factions aimed at restoring a new coalition government in Vientiane. There was, of course, one precondition: a U.S. withdrawal from Laos. Premier Souvanna Phouma said that he was "ready for a cease-fire," but, much to Washington's relief, he refused to discuss even a U.S. bombing cessation until Hanoi agreed to withdraw its still unacknowledged force of 67,000 troops (by White House accounting) in Laos. These troops, of course, were ignored in the Pathet Lao proposal.

The prince's public line comforted Washington, but one high Administration official confesses that "we still don't know what Souphanouvong may be telling his half brother." Eventually, the Laotian government could bend to Communist pressure and ask the U.S. to stop the bombing. In that case, Washington would face a hard choice. It could either risk a political outcry by continuing the raids, or it could stop the raids and risk giving the North Vietnamese the opportunity for still greater mischief in the big war next door.

Bulletins from Bad Guy Land

Captain Joseph Kerr Bush Jr., 25, the Texan whose death in Laos officially did not occur in "a combat situation," saw much action nonetheless. When he arrived in the country in June 1968 as an "assistant military attaché," he was posted to Muong Soui, a key town now in Communist hands. Bush's tour ended eight months later, when a force of 20 North Vietnamese commandos attacked his hilltop compound, a camp housing a group of Air Force radar specialists. The captain died fighting, and was awarded a posthumous Silver Star. Bush's wife Carol, who lives in Temple, Texas, with her daughter, says that her husband "believed in what he was doing." As his letters to her indicate, what Bush was doing and seeing would not be unfamiliar to his counterparts in Viet Nam.

Excerpts from the letters, made available to TIME by Mrs. Bush:

24 JUNE, '68. You asked how close Muong Soui is to Viet Nam—not close at all, but it is within sight of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. There is a war going on in Laos, and it is difficult to tell who is fighting who.

25 JUNE, '68. The Lao government doesn't really control but about one-half the country, and they're having to fight for that. From mountain tops in my area I can actually see bad guy trucks rolling down the road and they've got their nerve.

cont.

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MAR 23 1970

CIA, Army Officers Reported Helping Defend Laos Base

By GEORGE ESPER

VIENTIANE, Laos (AP) — The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, the U.S. Army and neighboring Thailand are directly involved in defense of the threatened Laotian base at Long Cheng, informed sources said Sunday night.

They said as many as 100 CIA agents, working under the cover of the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), are taking part in the secret operation, training Meo tribesmen as guerrillas in both Laos and Thailand.

It is known that U.S. Army officers directed a massive airlift of both Laotian and Thai reinforcements into Long Cheng, which is the headquarters of Gen. Vang Pao's American-trained army of Meo guerrillas and is under heavy North Vietnamese pressure. It is located 80 miles north of the capital, just below the Plain of Jars, now held by the North Vietnamese.

In Bangkok the Thai premier, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, denied Sunday that two Thai army battalions were sent to reinforce Long Cheng but admitted that "some volunteers" may have gone there.

Estimates in Bangkok of the number of volunteers, reportedly being trained by U.S. Special Forces teams, range from 300 to 12,000. The figure mentioned most often is 5,000.

Sources in Vientiane said as many as 400 Thai troops, including an artillery detachment, were flown into Long Cheng, mostly from bases in Thailand.

They added that the United States has been prodding the Thai government to give Laos more support, both economically and militarily.

Americans listed in official records as Army attaches constantly fly over Long Cheng as

aerial observers, gathering intelligence on which to base tactical ground and air operations.

Sources said these Americans never remain at Long Cheng overnight, but commute daily, leaving Vientiane early in the morning and returning by dusk. It is a 45-minute helicopter flight each way.

"We wouldn't want the Communists to capture any Americans or find any American dead on the battlefield," one source explained. Most enemy attacks on Long Cheng are launched under the cover of darkness:

North Vietnamese hit the base

with rocket fire Sunday for the third successive day. About a dozen rockets exploded in the predawn darkness, sources said, but first reports indicated no casualties or damage.

The U.S. Command said Sunday in Saigon that a U.S. Air Force OV10 Bronco was shot down and destroyed Saturday over the Plain of Jars north of Long Cheng, but the pilot was rescued with no reported injuries. The twin-engine armed reconnaissance craft was the eighth U.S. plane lost over Laos since the command began reporting air operations there March 10.

Speaking with newsmen at Bangkok airport after seeing off Indonesian President Suharto, Thanom Kittikachorn said the reason Thai volunteers were going to Laos was "probably because Laos and Thailand are

neighbors and both countries' people have blood relations. The volunteers may be cousins or brothers of Laotians."

Pressed on whether the airlift of Thai Troops had taken place, he said: "There may be some truth in it." But he added: "As I said, these men may be volunteers."

He also said some Laotian soldiers have "received training in Thailand and returned to Laos to be advisers and instructors in the Laotian army."

Gen. Surakit Mayalarb, Thai army chief of staff, said no Thai troops had been sent to Laos.

Surakit was reported to have flown secretly to Laos two weeks ago for talks on the military situation with the Laotian premier, Prince Souvanna Phouma, and his generals.

Vang Pao, the guerrilla general, was in Vientiane Sunday with other top Laotian military commanders to discuss the deteriorating war situation with Souvanna.

The Premier held separate meetings later Sunday with U.S. Ambassador G. McMurtrie Godley—with whom he reviewed the military situation in Laos—and the Communist Pathet Lao peace emissary, Col. Pradith Thlengtham.

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MAR 23 1970

Agnew Again Complains About Media, Suggesting He Wants to Take Heat Off

Vice President Agnew last week again attacked the news media, as though he had found this to be his best topic and, therefore, is reluctant to drop it. Instead, it would seem that by now the country would be getting awfully sick of the repetitive theme.

THIS TIME, MR. AGNEW at least changed the locale of his complaint. Speaking to a Republican fund raising dinner in the Virgin Islands, he complained that the nation's news media was more anxious to attack our military presence in Laos than the Communists' having 67,000 troops there.

"I'll admit that Pulitzers are not won as quickly exposing the evils of communism as they are by discrediting an American public official," the Vice President said.

Mr. Agnew is sounding more and more like a run-of-the-mill politician trying to win notice by exaggerating and distorting what he considers a popular theme.

If he were just the sort of politician he sounds like, instead of the Vice President, his remarks probably would not deserve comment. But this country should be better served by a man in his high position.

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE that Mr. Ag-

new is not aware that the news media are more interested in our presence in Laos than the Communists' because the media are mainly concerned about our violations of treaties and our official deception.

We agreed to the Geneva treaty that guaranteed the neutrality of Laos, yet we have fighting men there, many as civilians under the CIA's cloak of secrecy.

The North Vietnamese are also violating the Geneva agreement, as the news media have reported. But naturally, immoral acts, such as treaty violations or Song My massacres, by this country are of more concern to this country's media.

Presumably, if North Vietnam were a democracy, its media would be more concerned with its illegal acts than with ours.

Mr. Agnew said also that "innuendos and smears" against our public officials appear every day in the American media. Does he suggest that wrongdoing by our officials be glossed over, while the media concentrates on the crimes of North Vietnamese officials, over whom the voters of this country have no control?

THE VICE PRESIDENT certainly must have a better understanding of our reason for having a free press even if he apparently would like to curb that freedom.

23 MAR 1970

Red Courier Takes Plan to Lao Premier

By Laurence Stern

Washington Post Staff Writer

VIENTIANE, March 22—Premier Souvanna Phouma stepped gingerly along the Laotian political tightrope today.

He received a Pathet Lao emissary with a "proposition" from his half-brother, Prince Souphanouvong, for settlement of the war. Then he granted an amiable half-hour audience to his right-wing general staff.

As though to buffer his contacts between right and left, Souvanna also called on King Savang Vatthana to transmit his half-brother's letter.

[Souvanna said later that North Vietnam has moved 13,000 additional troops into Laos and the current Communist offensive could be the biggest Hanoi has ever launched in the neutralist nation, UPI reported.]

[The premier made the remarks in an address commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Laotian army Monday.]

Contradictory accounts were being circulated over the status of the battle for the strategic base of Long Tieng, operated by the Laotian government and the CIA.

The most reliable intelligence indicated that the battle was still in progress, with the base in government hands and reinforcements being rushed in from the south. Newsmen are being confined to Vientiane, where there are no reliable reports from either Laotian or American authorities.

Within the administrative capital, the two chief concerns are the outcome of the new peace probe and the political stability of Souvanna's government.

The Pathet Lao—in proposals announced nearly two weeks ago and presumably detailed in the letter handed over today by the Communist emissary—have raised the possibility of a cease-fire based on the withdrawal of American troops and cessation of the American bombings. But they have made no commitment to pull out the estimated 50,000 to 67,000 North Vietnamese troops said to be in Laos.

(The Pathet Lao representative also reportedly handed Souvanna two personal letters from Souphanouvong, one urging the premier to resume talks aimed at reconstituting the government and ending the fighting, and the other addressed to King Savang Vatthana, pledging Souphanouvong's fidelity to the monarch and urging him to use his influence to end American intervention in Laos, The Los Angeles Times reported.)

Souvanna's generals are known to be unhappy about the exchange of contacts between the premier and Souphanouvong. For today's meeting, the generals arrived just 35 minutes after the Pathet Lao delegation had left.

Among those present were Generals Kouprasith, commander of the region around Vientiane; Chief of Staff Oudon Sananikone; Commander in Chief Ouane Rathikoune and Souvanna's military chief of cabinet, Thongpanh Knoksy.

As they filed out, Thongpanh said the meeting had been called to "examine the military situation".

But it would have been most unlikely that the conversation failed to touch on the exchange of communications between the half-brothers who lead the opposing sides in the war.

Highly placed Lao officials in private conversation are voicing concern that the coup in Cambodia may increase North Vietnamese military pressures on the Laotian portion of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, especially if the new Cambodian government seeks to restrict Communist use of its section of the trail.

There has also been gossip—discounted in official quarters—of a possible coup by the right-wing Laotian generals on the Cambodian model.

(A U.S. OV-10 light spotter plane was shot down yesterday over the Plain of Jars but the pilot escaped uninjured, the U.S. Command in Saigon announced. The plane listed as downed in Laos in 12 days.)

Indochina: Dominoes Are Falling But Which Way?

WASHINGTON—While off in Moscow and Peking trying to get North Vietnamese troops thrown out of his country, Prince Norodom Sihanouk finds himself thrown out of power instead. At least, he appears to be thrown out.

His successors, led by Lieut. Gen. Lon Nol, assume the Prince's goals of neutrality and independence, suspend civil rights, obtain an expression of automatic recognition from the United States, and lend a willing hand to eager South Vietnamese troops who want to fire artillery into the ranks of the North Vietnamese and Vietcong across their border with Cambodia.

The North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao troops in northern Laos, meanwhile, continue their slow advance into portions of the country they have not hitherto occupied. The little Meo army organized by the Central Intelligence Agency abandons yet another outpost to them, but the C.I.A. begins to ferry in at least one battalion of regular Thai troops from nearby nervous Thailand. The White House says the Thai involvement is "limited."

Two Views

No one here doubts any longer that the Indochina dominoes are toppling fast, but hardly anyone can reliably tell which way.

The cheerful view in Government last week went something like this:

The allied position in South Vietnam keeps improving even as American troops continue to be withdrawn. Confronted by the apparent success of "Vietnamization," North Vietnam must take out its frustrations in Laos, threatening a further advance there to try to soften up the

antiwar sentiment and negotiations positions of the United States. And calculating that a Communist victory in Vietnam is no longer inevitable, the hard-pressed anti-Communist army leaders of Cambodia were emboldened to overthrow their oscillating Prince and may now help "win" the war by harassing and evicting the menacing North

Vietnamese forces on Cambodian soil.

The gloomy view, advanced less openly but with almost equal vigor, ran about as follows:

While biding its time and betting on the failure of "Vietnamization," Hanoi has been shrewdly building up its military, political and psychological positions in both Laos and Cambodia. The inexpensive but worrisome advance through Laos shocks the Thais and shakes the antiwar lions in the United States from their enforced sleep. The gradual build-up of North Vietnamese encampments in Cambodia—as near as 35 miles to Saigon—promises a major invasion after the bulk of the American forces are withdrawn from the war. The demonstration of Washington's inability to repel the threat will prove beyond doubt that the United States cannot long assure the stability of Southeast Asia.

The risks and opportunities in the situation seemed in such delicate balance that most analysts found it safest to accept portions of both theories.

Official Consensus

It thus remains something close to the official consensus here that the progressive transfer of combat duties to the South Vietnamese forces is working well, that it will permit further large troop withdrawals this spring and summer and that Hanoi, while no doubt hoarding its resources for a major effort after the Americans depart, should be in sufficient doubt about the final outcome to consider serious negotiation as a possible alternative to continued war.

Developments in Laos are therefore assessed accordingly. Washington is plainly distressed to find the Communist armies moving farther across that little kingdom than ever before, but

it suspects a political rather than a military purpose. The North Vietnamese already hold the crucial western half of Laos that provides a supply line into South Vietnam and they gain few material advantages from a wider occupation.

But by frightening the Thais and American opponents of war in Asia, they are thought to be trying to strengthen their hand for two possible kinds of negotiation. First, a tacit deal under which the United States would call off the intensive bombing of the Ho Chi Minh supply trail through Laos. Second, a better deal in a wider Indochina negotiation than they may provoke if "Vietnamization" should develop into a viable policy for Washington and Saigon.

To offset these thrusts, the Nixon Administration attempted several parries. The most important was designed to quash the signs of new antiwar protest, by explaining the extent of American involvement in Laos and also by setting clear limits to it.

B-52 Raid

Against the better judgment of most of his advisers, President Nixon last month also ordered one B-52 bombing raid beyond the Ho Chi Minh Trail, by way of saying that Hanoi was inviting greater bombing rather than less with its offensive. It is recognized throughout Washington, however, that the only effective military response to Communist advances in Laos would be a resumption of bombing in North Vietnam—a move that is so far deemed to carry greater risk of disaffection at home than the military value in the war zone.

Then came the coup in Cambodia. Most officials here were surprised, though they were not at all displeased, by the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk. He was valued as a shrewd though difficult figure on the Indochina scene and regularly looked to as a kind of weathervane of American performance. When he resumed diplomatic relations with Washington last summer, it was taken as confirmation that things in Vietnam were looking up. When he took off for Moscow and Peking to demand that Hanoi be forced to withdraw its

more than 40,000 troops from his soil, it was hoped that he might have some effect.

His argument was that if the North Vietnamese refused to budge, his impatient army, National Assembly and provincial leaders might seize power and move closer to the "American" camp.

The Prince is still not discounted here as a force in Cambodian politics, but the Administration does not share Senator Mike Mansfield's view that his downfall would be a terrible disaster.

There is fear that Hanoi might be provoked by the coup into further encroachments on Cambodian territory, leading to a wider conflict in which the South Vietnamese Army and through it, the United States, might become involved. But there was also a lingering hope that with a more determined anti-Communist regime in Phnom Penh, the ground forces of Cambodia and South Vietnam, supported by American air power, could effectively deprive Hanoi's forces of their Cambodian sanctuary.

—MAX FRANKEL

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MAR 22 1970

Widening Asian War Entangles U.S. Forces

By RICHARD DUDMAN

Chief Washington Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch

WASHINGTON, March 21

AFTER YEARS of saying it seeks no wider war the United States finds itself deeply involved in a widening war in Southeast Asia.

What is more, certain specific actions by the United States Government are giving impetus to the expansion of a conflict that already has cost this country more than 40,000 lives and more than 100 billion dollars.

The United States was the first nation to recognize the overthrow of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the erratically neutralist chief of state in Cambodia, although the Department of State de-emphasized the action by saying that the change in government was constitutional and did not affect existing U.S. recognition.

President Richard M. Nixon has acknowledged and justified the open military intervention in the war in northern Laos, as well as the intensive U.S. bombing of North Vietnamese supply routes that lead through eastern Laos to South Vietnam.

Two Thai army battalions have been air lifted by the United States to Long Cheng, Laos, site of a Central Intelligence Agency base threatened by a North Vietnamese offensive that already has taken the Plain of Jars. Transportation was supplied by Air America, an airline operated by the CIA.

THESE developments reflect the fact that the United States is embroiled in a conflict that has spread from just South Vietnam into much of the rest of Southeast Asia, threatens to involve still other nations of the region and, critics complain, throws serious new doubt on the Nixon Administration's plan to get the United States out of Vietnam.

In Cambodia, despite a formal announcement by the new leaders that the country would continue its policy of neutrality, troop movements were reported in frontier regions where 40,000 to 50,000 North Vietnamese soldiers have been seeking sanctuary from U.S. bombing raids in South Vietnam.

A significant question is whether the new Cambodian government will seek actively to push the North Vietnamese forces across the remarked border and deny them the refuge.

However, this raises the further question whether Cambodia's 35,000-man army can do the job, even with the occasional help it already has begun getting from South Vietnamese artillery along the border.

At some point there lies the possibility that Cambodia will ask for a renewal of the U.S. military aid that it accepted until 1963.

Informed sources say that indigenous paramilitary groups led by CIA agents, sometimes called White Star teams, have continued to operate in Cambodian frontier regions in efforts to check the flow of men and supplies along infiltration routes into South Vietnam.

THE SAME sources consider it unlikely, although not beyond possibility, that CIA agents and funds figured in the overthrow of Sihanouk. Casting doubt on this possibility is the fact that there are only 11 persons on the staff of the U.S. Embassy at Phnom Penh and only four or five other American permanent residents in the country. Sizable CIA operations usually are based in a U.S. Embassy and require large numbers of resident Americans, Government officials and private citizens to provide "cover" for undercover agents.

Whether the United States helped engineer Sihanouk's overthrow, the development there opens Cambodia as another possible arena for the widening struggle for control of Southeast Asia. As a starter, it presents an opportunity to open another front against the North Vietnamese.

Apparently President Nixon will face an eventual choice between helping Cambodia retain a role as a neutral buffer state or trying to coax it toward the role of military ally against North Vietnam.

Outside military intervention in Laos—by both the United States and the North Vietnamese—has been an open secret for years. Each saw an advantage in withholding public acknowledgement of its activities in Laos and in seeking to maintain the form if not the substance of the 1962 Geneva Agreement providing for Laotian neutrality.

A RECENT dispatch from Vientiane by Ian Wright of the Manchester Guardian shed new light on what was going on in the Plain of Jars in 1967 and 1968, when the Communist Pathet Lao and its North Vietnamese allies held the area and the United States was conducting "reconnaissance flights" over the plain, ostensibly to gather evidence of Communist violations of the 1962 agreement.

Wright spoke at length with refugees from the area who had been evacuated last month from the path of the Communist advance.

"To say that they are now happy would be an overstatement, but they appear to be profoundly relieved," he writes. "In effect, they have come out of hell. Their

hell was not the overweening Pathet Lao regime, which they found onerous enough and disliked, but the continuous hell of the bombing—most of it by American jet aircraft.

"They lived on the east side of the Plain of Jars, and since 1965 they have been subject to raids. In 1967 and 1968 the raids got worse. In the last months before they were 'liberated,' they were compelled to live in caves, hardly daring to come out into the daylight for fear of the bombing."

WRIGHT concludes that the villagers' accounts completely disproved the U.S.

story that the aircraft made only armed reconnaissance flights at the request of the Royal Lao government and fired only if fired upon.

Thailand's involvement in the war is not a new development, but it is becoming more open. For several years, there was no official word that the U.S. air bases in Thailand were used for raids on North Vietnam and the Ho Chi Minh trail. When it was revealed that Thai artillery and communications units were dressed in Laotian army uniforms and moved across the Mekong River to fight in Laos, the report was denied by the Thai government with a show of indignation.

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22 March 1970

STATINTL

'Credibility Gap' Over Secret Casualties

By Patrick J. Sloyan

Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — To strategic planners, Laos is not a country. It is a weakly defended corridor for Chinese or North Vietnamese troops seeking the prizes of Southeast Asia — Thailand, Cambodia, South Vietnam.

But to Americans there now or who have served there in the past, Laos seems more a comic opera where the names of leaders have a burlesque flavor and the soldiers tend to aim high in hopes the enemy will return the favor.

To some critics of President Nixon's current Laotian policy, the Oregon-size landlocked country is the breeding ground for another military commitment like Vietnam.

The alarm has been sounded by those in Congress who have been watching U.S. involvement in Laos for more than 12 years. "Up to our necks" in Laos, according to Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield.

But finding out what is really going on in Laos is no simple thing, as the President will tell you. His Key Biscayne statement aimed at curbing growing American concern about Laos was diluted by inaccuracy.

'Inaccurate'

"No American stationed in Laos had ever been killed in ground combat operations," Nixon said. Despite careful wording to avoid deaths of Americans from the air war over Laos, the flat assertion proved inaccurate.

Newspapers were quick to report that more than 12 Americans had been killed in 1968 when Communist troops overran a secret U.S. base in Laos that helped bombing

raids on North Vietnam.

The debate over Nixon's statement and some White House back-peddling tended to cloud one of the most detailed accounts ever of U.S. involvement in Laos.

Of the 1040 Americans in Laos getting U.S. government money, 320 are civilian and military personnel engaged in a military advisory or training activity, Nixon said.

Another 323 are what Nixon called "logistic" personnel. "There are no American ground combat troops in Laos," he said.

While it does not seem like much, Nixon's disclosures were substantial, considering Laos is a "secret" war for the United States.

At the Defense Department, briefings for newsmen on Laos are nonexistent. Trying to hurdle the Washington barrier by going to Laos has been fruitless.

Handout Battles

From Vientiane last week, Washington reporter James McCartney said everything was classified, even Nixon's statement on Laos. "If reporters demand to go places and see things, they don't get far. Not without an escort. Some even have been arrested."

Pentagon reporter Fred Hoffman of the Associated Press recalled his stay in Laos. "I never met anyone who had seen a battle in Laos. As far as reporters were concerned, these battles were fought by handout statements from opposing forces."

U.S. military involvement in Laos dates back to 1954 and the final loss of face by the French at Dien Bien Phu. The French colonial role faded in Laos, it was replaced by U.S. military aid.

In September, a Communist-striking force of 3500 troops began an offensive, overrunning eighty villages in Northern Laos. In December, the first U.S. Military Advisory Group arrived in Vientiane.

It was disguised as the "programs evaluation office" (under the State Department's AID program) to skirt charges of violating the Geneva accords.

Between 200 and 300 American military men, under the command of Brig. Gen. John A. Heintzes, were dropped from the active lists of the Defense Department to serve as the civilians in Laos.

These American soldiers in civvies were training the Royal Laotian Army to handle attacks by Communist-connected Pathet Lao forces and North Vietnamese troops.

U.S. military advisers are not having much success. The trouble is the "live-and-let-live" attitude of Laotian troops who, according to U.S. soldiers, are "about as bloodthirsty as an American Boy Scout."

The 1962 Laotian agreement barred future foreign military involvement, it was promptly ignored by North Vietnam. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) activities increased.

Along with the Green Beret Special Forces of the Army, CIA employees use undetermined amounts of money, equipment and time to improve the quality of Laotian forces.

As the war started to build in Vietnam, it tended to slow in Laos. Most U.S. bombing raids on Laos were aimed at Hanoi supply lines to South Vietnam. But U.S. training

SON HERALD

22 Mar 1970

The ousting of Prince Sihanouk had all the hallmarks of the C.I.A. at its best

AFTER several years of waiting in the shadows, America's Central Intelligence Agency may be fully operational again.

This week's incredible coup in Cambodia, which will have such far-reaching consequences through the entire Asian theatre, had the stamp of the C.I.A. at its most professional.

Of course, there will be no official detail on the C.I.A. role, but it would be naive in today's world to assume that Prince Norodom Sihanouk's overthrow was just a lucky accident for the United States.

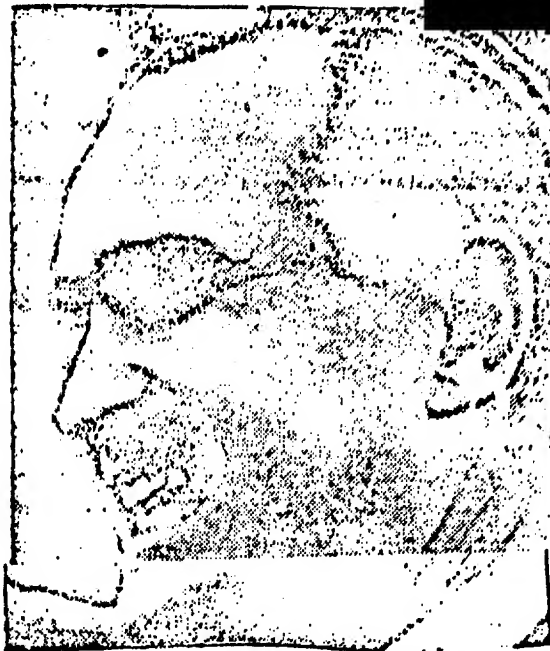
Way back in 1966, the agency was accused by some watchdog American Senators of supporting Cambodian rebels who opposed the Prince — an accusation that was widely trumpeted about South-East Asia, where the C.I.A. is credited with having spies in every town and in every Government.

It probably does.

While the super-spy agency has made grotesque mistakes over the past 10 years, it has also scored some brilliant successes and, under the enthusiastic support of President Nixon, C.I.A. director Richard Helms and his world-wide network of spies are doubtless more powerful than ever.

Charges that they had meddled far too much in Asian politics caused the C.I.A. men to lie low for some time, but it was obvious even to a reporter on a brief visit to South-East Asia this month that the C.I.A. was "gung-ho" again.

Transport and passenger planes of Air America Inc., which is run as a C.I.A. subsidiary, are to be seen in Thailand, Laos and South Vietnam, and it is common knowledge that these aircraft are used to move agents and weapons for secret projects.



C.I.A. chief Richard Helms . . . more powerful than ever

STATINTL

THE SPOOKS ARE BACK IN BUSINESS IN ASIA

From PETER
MICHELMORE
in New York

Laos: War in North, Parade in South

By Laurence Stern

Washington Post Foreign Service

VIENTIANE, March 21 — Communist troops today took control of the important government supply base of Sam Thong and advanced within a mile of Long Tieng, headquarters of Gen. Vang Pao's clandestine army of Meo tribesmen.

But as news of the Communist's successes reached Vientiane, a formation of Royal Lao soldiers paraded on the Boulevard of a Million Elephants here to the somber strains of the French Foreign Legion march. They were rehearsing for Monday's Army Day celebrations.

This was one of the small ironies of the muddled state of affairs in Laos today. Rumor and speculation hung like the pervasive dry season haze over the capital where, as one foreign diplomat put it, "things are confusing enough when they are quiet."

As a counterpoint to the military action, a new installment began unfolding today in the peace probe—the first in more than four years—between Pathet Lao and government forces.

An emissary arrived last night with a letter from Pathet Lao leader Souphanouvong to his half brother, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, with supposedly concrete proposals for a settlement.

Dramatic Arrival

The arrival of the emissary, Col. Pradith Thiangthan, by air from Hanoi, came off as a stagey piece of international melodrama.

Although the contents of the letter he carried in a briefcase remained secret, highly placed government officials here were reported to be pessimistic over the immediate prospects for negotiation.

Still, the fact that the two sides are finally in contact holds out some long-term hope. Last year Souphanouvong spurned a peace-feeler from Souvanna transmitted through Soviet Ambassador Victor Minin.

The impact of the coup in Cambodia is still another imponderable in this volatile mix. Souvanna was said to be privately pleased at the development.

He remained publicly silent. He may not remember too kindly the deposed Prince Sihanouk's jibes at him as a "puppet" of the "American imperialists."

There have been some rumors of a "Cambodian solution" in Laos by the right wing, and one press service tonight reported that Souvanna has moved a special unit of troops into the capital to ward off a rumored coup.

But a spokesman for Souvanna denounced the report as completely false and insisted on a retraction. Well-informed observers here are highly skeptical of any such move on the part of rightist leader Prince Boun Oum.

Laos and Cambodia

"The attitude now is to rally round the flag," said one knowledgeable foreigner.

"It is not a case of Laos becoming Cambodia," said another long-time resident. "It is a case of Cambodia becoming Laos."

The military situation, meanwhile, is highly deceptive. With the exception of the battle at Sam Thong and Long Tieng, there is very little war in progress at the moment.

Many encounters between Communist and government troops are being grossly over-reported—often turning, upon examination, into minor skirmishes between handfuls of men.

The chief casualties of the war at the moment are the more than 40,000 villagers who are being evacuated from the vicinity of Sam Thong and Long Tieng by foot in the face of the Communist advance.

Attack Long Tieng

[North Vietnamese forces attacked Laotian government positions today on Skyline Ridge, about two miles north of Long Tieng, the Associated Press reported.]

[Long Tieng is 80 miles north of Vientiane. The ridge lies between Long Tieng and

Sam Thong, the abandoned U.S.-operated supply base 10 miles to the northwest.]

If Long Tieng falls, as it may in the next week, it would be a serious blow, both to the prestige of Gen. Vang Pao and to the war effort, since the base houses an airstrip and the elaborate communications center that is used for air strikes and ground operations against the Communist forces.

Sleep Elsewhere

American Army and Central Intelligence Agency advisers assigned to Long Tieng have stopped sleeping in the town during the past week to avoid the risks of death or capture. Should the base fall, the Meo general would have to fall back and establish a new command center. But it would be no means end the desultory war that has see-sawed across Laos for nearly 20 years.

The government has moved in reinforcements, however, and the outcome of the battle of Long Tieng has by no means been decided yet.

Meanwhile the state of affairs in Laos was best summed up by the cable one correspondent here received from his home office. "Don't bother filing," it said. "The story is too confusing."

Nations Deny Thais Being Used in Laos

From News Dispatches

Both the Laotian and Thai governments yesterday denied reports that Thai troops had been sent as reinforcements to the Laotian base at Long Tieng.

"There are no Thai troops in Laos," authoritative sources in Vientiane said, backed up by a simultaneous statement from Bangkok.

Laotian officials admitted there were some Thai military officers in Laos but said they had been sent there as advisers at the request of the Laotian government.

The denials followed press reports Friday that two battalions of Thai troops were at the base. They were flown there by Air America transport planes, sources said.

The Associated Press, which initially reported the presence of Thai troops, said yesterday its correspondent in Vientiane was called to a government office and asked who his sources of information were. He refused to name the sources, the AP said, and the government then denied the report, adding, "A warning will be made to the representative of the Associated Press."

According to AP, soldiers in the Thai 2d Army in northeast Thailand have been volunteering for duty in Laos in large numbers.

The Thai volunteers there are of Laotian stock, speak Lao and once in Laos would be indistinguishable from a

Laotian soldier, Bangkok sources reported.

Thai volunteers' pay, reported to be met by the U.S. government, ranges up to \$250 a month, compared with normal pay of \$6. The volunteers reportedly resign from the Thai army and then are said to be trained by U.S. Special Forces before being sent in units to join up with the Lao army.

One source in Vientiane said the arrivals from Thailand included Thai artillerymen. While never officially confirmed, Thai artillerymen were reported to have engaged in the battle for Muong Soui at the western edge of the Plain of Jars last June.

BIRMINGHAM, ALA.
NEWS

MAR 21 1970
E - 179,129
S - 219,330

The Big Lie In Asia

Sen. Fulbright, in his usual broad-minded approach to such questions, said right away that he was willing to assume "on general principles" that the American CIA had a hand in the Cambodian developments.

Others in the American peace bloc made it sound as if, because an anti-Communist government seems to have taken over, the cause of peace has suffered a setback, for which U. S. militants are to blame (or at least will applaud).

Similarly, in Laos, they view with alarm the U. S. involvement there and try to make it seem that we have launched an aggressive campaign to control the country—while they rarely acknowledge the long-standing presence of thousands of North Vietnamese soldiers in Laos in violation of the Geneva accords, and never point out that our involvement in Laos is directly in response to requests by the legitimate Laotian government, which is fighting for its life.

We are most reluctant to tag critics of U. S. policy as un-American—but some go beyond the bounds of honest criticism. It is impossible to conclude anything but that their activities are anti-U. S. national interest, and to assume that since they know better, their distortion of the facts underlying U. S. involvement and activities in Southeast Asia is deliberate.

Moreover, they accuse the U. S. of refusing to negotiate seriously at Paris, when the truth is . . . well, listen to this from this week's session of the peace talks. The North Vietnamese delegate is speaking:

"For a long time now the United

States has continually acted to intimidate and violate (Cambodia's) sovereignty and its territory in the hope of sapping its independence and neutrality."

The truth is that the Viet Cong and North Vietnam have literally occupied portions of Cambodia for years, using the areas as sanctuaries for their aggression in South Vietnam—this is the very issue Cambodians rioted about last week, sacking the North Vietnamese and V. C. embassies and eventually bringing about the ouster of Sihanouk.

"The United States is thus aiming to make Cambodia into a second Laos or South Vietnam. It is perfectly clear that the Nixon administration, in order to save the defeat in Vietnam, is not only escalating in Laos, but is seeking moreover to expand the war to the entire Indochinese peninsula, thus gravely threatening peace in all Southeast Asia."

Get that. The U. S. is escalating the war in Laos. The fighting there is the result—the whole world knows this, and it is inconceivable that members of the United States Senate don't know it—of North Vietnamese armed invasion of Laos, which the legitimate government of Laos is resisting.

How can you talk, much less negotiate with people who brazenly, without batting an eyelash, turn the truth around 180 degrees and swear by it? The bitterest pill of all is that some influential people in our own country, wittingly or unwittingly, encourage them by leading people to believe that their bare-faced lies about the United States of America's alleged "imperialism" are true.



21 MAR 1970

'Patriots' peace proposal brought to Laos capital

Daily World Foreign Department

Peace proposals from the Lao Patriotic Front were brought last night to Vientiane "Royal Lao" capital, by LPF Col. Pradit. Thienghem, whose plane reached the heavily-guarded Wattay Airport near Vientiane as small LPF patrols were reported about five miles away.

Col. Pradit was greeted by Col. Soth Petrasy, the LPF representative in Vientiane.

Pradit was the first LPF official to make a public visit to the Lao capital since 1963, when the U.S. CIA sabotaged the coalition government and drove the LPF out. Only a small LPF delegation under Col. Soth remained in Vientiane under conditions resembling permanent siege.

LPF troops were reported to

be within two miles of Long Cheng, headquarters for the CIA-supported clandestine army of General Vang Pao. The battle for Long Cheng shaping up could determine control of northeast Laos.

Long Cheng's sister base of Sam Thong, six miles to the northeast, reportedly was recaptured yesterday by CIA forces, but later reports said no planes could land there because its airport was under fire. CIA reinforcements pouring into the Long Cheng-Sam Thong area, 75 miles northeast of Vientiane, were described by a UPI correspondent as "mercenaries trained in Thailand."

The LPF radio earlier broadcast peace proposals by Prince Souphanouvong, head of the LPF Central Committee, which called

for a halt to U.S. bombing and a general cease-fire in Laos.

Cambodia events

In Saigon, puppet Lieutenant-General Do Cao Tri gloated on TV yesterday that "Communist" forces will be "annihilated" in Cambodia, and said the Cambodian National Assembly's ouster of Prince Norodom Sihanouk as chief of state this week will prove "very beneficial." Lt.-Gen. Tri commands the Saigon forces in the 11 provinces bordering Cambodia.

Sihanouk is still in Peking and has said nothing further about his vow last Tuesday to return to Cambodia even if he faces arrest. The new government of armed forces commander General Lon Nol said yesterday: "Our army must suppress by armed actions all methods which Sihanouk could provoke in attempting to make use of the legality which he no longer has."

Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital, is still full of heavily-armed troops, and at least five tanks surrounded the National Assembly building. The Assembly suspended the Cambodian constitution on Thursday and granted "full power" to Gen. Lon Nol.

Cheng Heng, the pro-U.S. millionaire acting as head of state, will be confirmed in office tomorrow by the Assembly. The third member of this triumvirate is Prince Sirik Matik, a deputy premier who is a member of the rival Sisowath branch of the Cambodian royal family.

Gen. Lon Nol is known as a conservative, pro-U.S. officer who worked closely with the U.S. military mission in Cambodia in 1955-63.

NATIONAL JOURNAL
21 Mar 1970

STATINTL

AID in Laos: The Senate Foreign Relations Committee March 13 met in closed session to receive a briefing on the Agency for International Development mission in Laos from Central Intelligence Agency Director Richard M. Helms.

21 Mar 1970

A Washout

"Aid for development does not usually buy dependable friends," remarked the Lester Pearson commission, which World Bank president McNamara had set to studying the problems of poor countries. It can even lose them, for instance by being a cover for the CIA; in Laos, CIA men pass as the Agency for International Development's "Rural Development Annex." President Nixon's own commission on foreign aid, appointed last September, ignores such unpleasant facts but does propose dismantling AID and replacing it with a new US development bank and other new institutions, topped by a coordinating International Development Council with a high-level chairman in the White House. What would be achieved thereby is hard to say. The Pearson report wanted aid increased to achieve a six percent annual growth rate for developing countries. The Peterson Report—Rudolph A. Peterson is president of the Bank of America and could be the aid man in the White House—is coy about both funding and targets. Its proposals could be a first step toward Senator Fulbright's goal of internationalizing foreign aid; on the other hand the report upholds bilateral aid, and says tartly that "the international organizations will have to take a less parochial view of their mission."

Senator Fulbright has condemned bilateral aid for "becoming a vehicle for deep American involvement in areas and issues which lie beyond both our vital interests and our competence." The Peterson report says a chief barrier to development is "unresponsive social and political systems." But by this it doesn't seem to mean the Thieu regime, Chiang Kai-shek, or Greek and Latin American juntas. The report expects that military aid to that sort of regime will go up not down, and it proposes bigger loans to Latin America even while admitting that these countries have what it delicately calls "a capital outflow"—the top fellows stash their boodle in Swiss accounts.

The US is providing as much development aid as all other assisting countries lumped together. Additionally, US military aid runs almost \$3.5 billion a year, including Vietnam, and the report says that "as the United States reduces its forces overseas, increased security assistance may be needed for a time, to cushion the effect and to improve local security capabilities." What that could mean can be measured by the yardstick of what, according to the report, happens now: Washington not only provides the arms but pays for their operation and maintenance; in addition "US military missions do most of the detailed logistical planning . . ." Does the Peterson report request Mr. Nixon forthwith to butcher the sacred animal? On the contrary, it objects to Congress's attempted curbs on poor countries that waste aid by acquiring arms. "Removing [legislative restrictions] would put the

United States in a better position to work out with those countries, on a mature partnership basis, military equipment expenditure policies . . ." Peterson is going to be a very popular fellow in Athens, Rio de Janeiro and Bangkok.

Still, the bleaker side has to be faced up to. The report concedes that developing countries are neck-deep in debt and that some of this can be blamed on "excessive military purchases." The debt actually adds up to a staggering \$50 billion, and the cost of merely servicing it is increasing thrice as fast as the debtors' earnings are rising. So far, the problem has been kicked under the rug by "rescheduling the debt of countries about to default," in other words not embarrassing them by asking for the money. Fearing this can't go on, the report suggests as a partial answer further doses of lending but on softer terms, by the proposed US International Development Bank, using appropriated money to subsidize its loans. There is a better recipe: ruthlessly pruning credit for arms, and handing the American foreign aid contribution to the World Bank, its International Development Association, and other such international financial bodies.

The Nixon Watch

Lousing Up Laos

Enormous care and effort went into the preparation of the "precise description of our current activities in Laos" that Mr. Nixon submitted to the American public on March 6. He got the assent of the National Security Council to a degree of disclosure that he and two of his predecessors, Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, had not previously considered to be in the national interest. Nixon then assigned to his assistant for national security affairs, Henry A. Kissinger, the task of making certain that the disclosure was in fact precise if not complete, wholly credible, beyond any possible criticism on the grounds of inaccuracy or deceit. Kissinger undertook the task with characteristic and ferocious zeal. He warned the Departments of State and Defense, the military services, the CIA, the aid agency, the several subagencies that participate in clandestine operations in Vietnam and Laos that the officials who provided him with requested data would be fired if any of the information turned out to be incomplete, inaccurate or misleading in any way. Every American who could be fairly said to be "stationed in Laos" was to be identified, his or her activities were to be precisely defined, and military operations, air and ground, conducted in and over Laos were to be reported to him in equally meticulous detail. Kissinger and his staff had access to the secret testimony recently taken by Senator Symington's subcommittee on the Laos involvement, and took special care that the figures and assertions of fact incorporated in the Nixon statement should conform with the Symington record, when and if a sanitized version of it is published.

Equal care attended certain corollaries. The one new and positive action that the President and his advisers could think of, apart from the factual disclosure, was an appeal to Soviet Premier Kosygin to join British Prime Minister Wilson in working with other signatories of the 1962 Geneva Accords for restoration of the terms that then, in theory, guaranteed the peace and neutrality of Laos. Wilson and Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma of Laos had already made the same request, without effect. The United States had previously refused to formally join or support such requests to the Soviet Government, in connection with the Laos and Vietnam conflicts, in the belief that the Soviets would refuse and that it was idle to waste what goodwill there was between Washington and Moscow on a predictably vain gesture. Given the present decision to make the gesture, the normal course would have been to forewarn the Soviet Government of the public announcement. This was not done before the morning of March 6 because, if the request had been privately rejected before it was announced, the President could not have opened the Laos statement with

did, with his one and only peace in Laos.

Much thought also went into the form of the announcement and the extent to which Nixon would personally identify himself with it. He could have delivered the whole on national television, as he did his November 3 speech on Vietnam. He could have recorded and filmed parts of it for radio and television, as he sometimes does with quite minor statements. He did neither. He postponed the statement until he had arrived and was settled at his Florida retreat on Key Biscayne for a long (Friday-Sunday) weekend. He remained in seclusion when his staff issued a written statement in his name and followed it with the kind of special, though by now hardly unusual, background briefing at which reporters are exposed to the guidance and wisdom of the highest available "White House officials." The reporters present are not supposed to translate this into "White House official," but some do.

The central purpose of the statement and of the supplementary briefing was to put to rest "grossly inaccurate" reports and "intense public speculation" to the effect that "the United States involvement in Laos has substantially increased in violation of the Geneva Accords, that American ground forces are engaged in combat in Laos and that our air activity has had the effect of escalating the conflict." Mr. Nixon acknowledged that "our air activity" has increased, both to inhibit North Vietnam's reinforcement of its units in South Vietnam over the Ho Chi Minh trails through northern Laos, and in direct support of Laotian government forces fighting North Vietnamese and Laotian Communist forces in Laos. This the United States would continue to do, along with the supply, training and field support of "regular and irregular Laotian forces" so long as this was "necessary to protect American lives in Vietnam and to preserve a precarious but important balance in Laos"—and also necessary, the President said, "to prevent the recognized Laotian government from being overwhelmed by larger Communist forces dominated by the North Vietnamese." But the major intent of his statement and of the briefer's amplification was to minimize the American involvement in ground combat in Laos. Of a total of 1040 Americans stationed in Laos, in direct government employ or on contract, 320 were military advisers and trainers, 323 were suppliers, and (the briefer said) a little over 200 of these were military personnel. Three sentences in the Nixon statement drove home the point: "There are no American ground combat troops in Laos. We have no plans for introducing ground combat forces into Laos," and—in an assertion that Kissinger had worked hard and carefully to document beforehand—"No American stationed in Laos has ever been killed in ground combat operations."

This was Nixon's only reference to American casualties and deaths in Laos. He left it to his briefer to divulge, with a good deal of rumbling and correc-

continued

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

MARCH 13

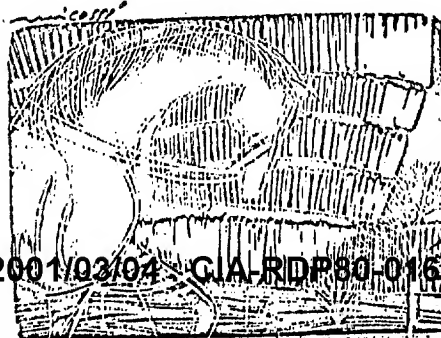
SENATOR FULBRIGHT, who generally fears the worst and is generally confirmed in his fears, now has it on the highest authority that the Central Intelligence Agency is involved in military affairs in Laos and that, substantiating one of the oldest of the Senator's misgivings, the military involvement is an aspect of our foreign-aid program. The director of the C.I.A., Richard Helms, testified before the Foreign Relations Committee today, and although the session was closed and no verbatim testimony was released, the Senator's office said that Helms had acknowledged that personnel under his command were working out of the Agency for International Development to train, equip, and finance Laotian loyalists and mercenaries to fight against indigenous Pathet Lao rebels and North Vietnamese regulars. No denials have been made. According to the Fulbright version of the director's testimony, a unit of AID known as the Rural Development Annex is—as some newspaper accounts have rumored—responsible for recruiting and training guerrillas, while another unit, known as the Special Requirements Office, has been meeting the anti-Communist combatants' requirements for matériel and money. None of today's revelations—or any other revelation during this recent period of preoccupation with Laos—was inconsistent with the President's report on Laos a week ago, in which it was stated that of the one thousand and forty Americans on the United States' payroll in Laos three hundred and twenty are engaged in "a military-advisory or military-training capacity" and that "logistics personnel number three hundred and twenty-three." While it is possible that the President did not tell the whole truth—it is even possible that he doesn't know the whole truth—these figures are roughly in line with the calculations of non-governmental observers. Though the President could hardly have been expected to explain to the world that the Rural Development Annex was a counter-insurgency school or that the Special Requirements Office specialized in logistics, most people who studied his statement with any care assumed that he was talking about the C.I.A., which is in the main a clandestine branch of the military, and which almost always works behind one false front or another. The President's avowal of the fact before the Foreign Relations Committee

but the naming of some of the fronts.

In getting this avowal, Senator Fulbright scored a double personal triumph. He is opposed to military operations in Southeast Asia because he thinks them immoral and futile, and he is opposed to foreign aid not because he doesn't want to aid foreigners but because he has long looked upon it as a road to war. The Helms testimony is damaging to both our military operations and our aid programs, though its direct impact on either is not likely to be great. Support for foreign aid is already so low that little could weaken it further, and the preoccupation with Laos has less to do with our recent or present role there than with Hanoi's plans for the future of the place and with our response to those plans. It may be, of course, that Hanoi has no plans beyond the obvious one of continuing to use the Ho Chi Minh Trail as a means of access to South Vietnam. In territorial terms, more than half of Laos has been under Communist control for years, and military experts here and in other capitals are generally agreed that the rest could be taken with ease at any time Hanoi decided to do so. It hasn't happened, and from this it has commonly been inferred that Hanoi has weighed the advantages of a takeover against the disadvantages and found the latter to be heavier. As a country (and there are those who balk at calling it a "country" at all, on the ground that it has hardly any elements of nationhood), Laos is practically without resources other than acreage for growing rice and opium. It has the strategic value of a crossroads, but this is already being exploited by North Vietnam in its war against the United States and South Vietnam, and the only military point of total occupation would be the opportunity it would provide to engage Thailand in a war on its eastern and northern frontiers. If the Laotian government were overthrown or were forced to take an anti-American position, the Rural Development Annex

could be closed down, but the counter-insurgents being trained by the C.I.A. don't appear to be putting their training to much use, and it isn't likely that we would stop bombing the Ho Chi Minh Trail because of any change in Laotian administrations. If economic and military considerations prevail in Hanoi, the case for full-scale war in Laos must be as unimpressive there as it appears to be here.

There is always the possibility, though, that economic and military considerations are not the dominant ones, and that there may be sound political and ideological reasons for doing what otherwise seems unreasonable. There are reports of a North Vietnamese buildup in Laos, and not all of them are from suspect sources, though some assuredly are. The President says that in the last four months thirteen thousand "additional" troops have entered Laos from North Vietnam, this bringing the "total" to over sixty-seven thousand. But he did not say—presumably because he could not be sure—what they were doing or where they were going. The count is the work of Air Force reconnaissance, and it is well known that the Air Force, having been relieved of the opportunity to serve us by bombing North Vietnam, has been directing its attention to Laos. If there are now more North Vietnamese troops travelling the Ho Chi Minh Trail than before, it may be simply because our bombs are falling in far greater profusion, causing more loss of life along the trail and more damage to it—thereby leading Hanoi to have greater numbers of troops in transit and a larger labor force to repair the damage. The fact that Communists recently recaptured the Plain of Jars may or may not be militarily significant; that combat area has changed hands every few months for years—as a rule, with very little combat. Yet it may well be that the President's figures are substantially accurate and that the North Vietnamese are getting into position for a broad offensive in Laos. Hanoi may see a victory there as a morale builder at home. It may see a Communist domination of Laos—or just the threat of Communist domination—as an asset to its diplomacy in Paris and elsewhere. It may see an opportunity to confront this Administration with disagreeable political choices and to expose the contradictions in American policy. The fact that our client, Premier Souvanna Phouma, has suddenly become very eager to negotiate with the Communists and bring them back into his Cabinet has to be



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continued

350 Fight in Laos, Thailand Indicates

By DONALD KIRK
Foreign Correspondent of The Star

BANGKOK — Thai officials strongly indicated for the first time today that up to 350 Thais may be fighting on the side of Laotian government forces in Northern Laos.

Authorities publicly denied reports that two battalions of Thai troops were supporting the beleaguered base of Long Chien, but privately hinted that Thais may have been sent a week or 10 days ago into the conflict against the North Vietnamese.

Sources here said the Thais involved in the fighting may not have actually been members of the Thai armed forces.

"A number of Thais have joined the government side in Laos on their own," said one knowledgeable source, indicating the Thais may have been recruited as members of the army of general Vang Pao, in charge of Laotian government forces in the mountainous jungle regions north and northeast of the capital of Vientiane.

The army of General Vang Pao consists almost entirely of Meo tribesmen, who roam the mountains from the southeastern Chinese province of Yunnan to Northern Thailand. The Central Intelligence Agency provides the money for Vang Pao's forces, equipped with American weapons and uniforms and

transported from isolated outposts on American aircraft.

Some sources believed, however, that the Thais with Vang Pao's army may have been members of regular Thai units, possibly artillery batteries flown into Long Chien to help defend the key base in the face of the most serious Communist military offensive in Laos since the Geneva accords were signed in 1962.

Thai officials were extremely reluctant to discuss the entire issue of their possible military involvement in Laos. In the past, Thai authorities have routinely denied all reports any Thai troops were supporting Laotian government forces.

One reason for the sensitivities of the Thais on this subject is their general embarrassment over the close diplomatic and

military alliance they have formed with the United States. Thai authorities have provided air bases for American planes flying over Laos and Vietnam and have sent a division of troops to South Vietnam, but have always tried to avoid publicity that might compromise their relations with "neutral" Asian countries.

U.S. officials here have supported the Thais' policy of secrecy by declining to comment on any aspect of the Thai role in the Laotian conflict. The Americans rarely discussed the military phase of American participation in Laos until President Nixon's statement three weeks ago acknowledging the United

States was supporting Laotian forces with air strikes, equipment and advisers.

Thai authorities were reported extremely upset by the admission of White House press secretary Ronald Ziegler of "very limited Thai involvement in Laos."

Ziegler used the "very limited" phrase late yesterday in telling newsmen that a report of two battalions of Thai troops being ferried into Laos by Air America transport planes was "grossly exaggerated."

He made clear that the part of the report he termed "grossly exaggerated" concerned two battalions of Thai troops.

He would not comment on the portion of the report that the troops had been flown from Thailand into Laos by Air America planes. In effect, he refused to confirm or deny the use of Air America planes in some troop movements.

Ziegler's statement also was the first official acknowledgment in Washington of any involvement of Thai troops in the Laotian fighting. There have been reports of small numbers of Thai military advisers working with Laotian forces and flying Laotian war planes.

Specific Report

The report Ziegler was asked about was that Air America planes flew two battalions of Thai troops to reinforce Laotian forces defending Long Chien, a U.S.-supported base in Laos, against advancing North Vietnamese troops.

It was the first report of any sizable force of Thai troops entering the current conflict in neighboring Laos.

After saying "the report is grossly exaggerated," Ziegler said "I am not going to comment on the very limited Thai involvement in Laos."

The United States is deeply committed to the defense of Thailand, a Southeast Asian Treaty ally which has made several air bases available to the U.S. Air Force.

American planes fly from the Thai bases on regular bombing missions against North Viet-

namese forces in North Vietnam, along the Ho Chi Minh trail and in the support of the Laotian troops fighting the North Vietnamese in Northern Laos.

The introduction of even a limited number of Thai troops into the battle for Laos is in line with the emphasis in the "Nixon Doctrine," proclaimed at Guam last summer, on regional cooperation by the free countries of Southeast Asia for their own defense.

Thai soldiers were first reported in Laos when Communist forces overran the government-held base at Muong Soui on Route 7, the main road across Northern Laos from North Vietnam. Thai artillery batteries were said to have lowered their guns and fired point blank at the Communist forces before they were evacuated on American planes.

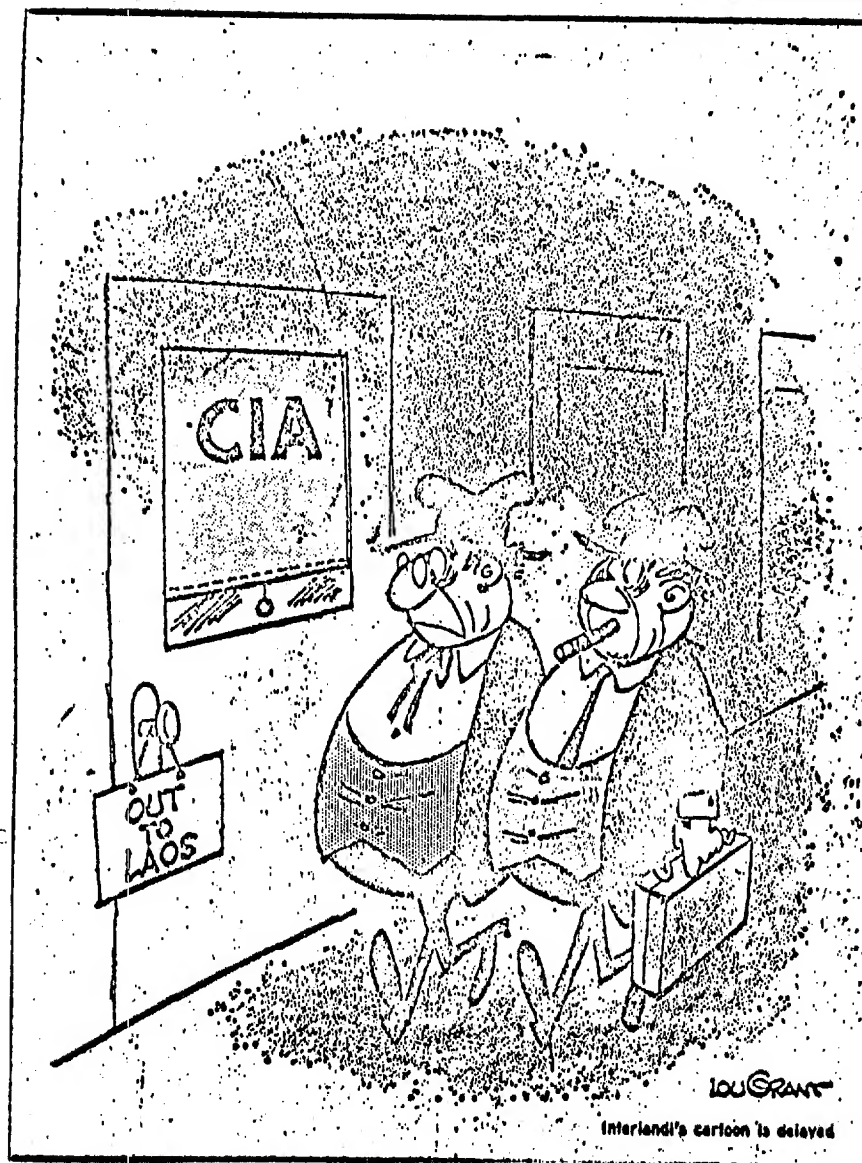
Direct Threat

Despite their unhappiness over reports of Thai troops in Laos, authorities here were not expected to change their general position. The Thais, fighting Communist-led guerrilla revolt in both the northern and the north-eastern provinces, view Communist advances across Laos as a direct threat on their own territory.

Indeed, some Thai leaders believe the country should send large-scale forces into Laos and directly confront the North Vietnamese. Analysts here view this kind of move as extremely unlikely, however, unless the North Vietnamese troops were to

march out of the mountains and approach the Mekong River border dividing Laos from Thailand.

For the record, however, Thai officials simply were not discussing any phase of their military interests in Laos. "We did not send troops to Laos and we have no intention of doing so in the future," was the only comment offered publicly today by a spokesman of the Supreme Command Headquarters here.



MONTGOMERY, ALA.
ADVERTISER

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S - 80,831
MAR 20 1970

A Deserved But Untimely Coup

CAMBODIA, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam are largely unnatural countries thrust on the world in the last two decades. They have been pushed far beyond their rightful positions of importance.

Vietnam has been a major headliner for almost 10 years. A scattering of news about Thailand reaches front pages only because of the strategic role it plays as a major U.S. base in the Vietnam war. Normally, it would be heard from only in travel articles about its unique hedges and royal aviaries. Laos is like a pot of gumbo, heated and cooled periodically to suit appetites.

Now it's Cambodia again. Cambodia used to make the news because its ruling prince for 29 years possessed an advanced talent for pomposity, incongruity and plain lying, which he faithfully exposed to the world with a perverse sense of timing.

Since Prince Sihanouk has apparently lost his job, it would be comforting to write him off, in much the same way that his sister-under-the-skin Madame Nhu was dispatched. But it isn't so easy.

From a rice paddy foundation, Sihanouk somehow managed to insinuate himself and Cambodia into larger affairs during the last decade. It is a sad commentary that this Indo-Chinese princeling, otherwise a laughable buffoon, has an effect on the East-West balance of power and world peace.

Here are some of the possibilities of the Cambodian coup:

Sihanouk was on a trip to Moscow and Peking when he was deposed. It was thought in Washington he was using the threat of a right-wing challenge to his rule to reinforce demands that Hanoi be persuaded to withdraw its troops from Cambodia, a sanctuary from American firepower in Vietnam. Such a removal, although doubtful, would have eased the pressures in Vietnam. That's supposedly shot now.

In the past, Sihanouk hop-scotched between the communist and non-communist camps. As an unequalled egotist, he would stoop to anything to regain power, including enlisting the aid of Hanoi. His challengers preside over an ill-trained and poorly equipped army of 35,000. Hanoi has at least 40,000 troops on Cambodian soil. It would be no contest if the communist guns were aimed at Cambodia rather than Vietnam.

The coup could provoke new encroachments in Cambodia by Hanoi. The danger is that the Vietnam war could be extended into Cambodia. It is already threatening in Laos.

There is the possibility of help from the new Cambodian leaders. They could exert pressure on North Vietnamese troops camped on their land, which Sihanouk persistently refused to do. But there is danger there, too. If the Cambodians wanted to peck at the North Vietnamese, they would need additional equipment and assistance.

The Central Intelligence Agency and other secret agencies would probably be delighted to get into the act in Cambodia, as they are in Laos. A North Vietnamese reaction would spread the war over almost the entire Southeast Asia peninsula, sucking the U.S. deeper into the mire. Actually, the CIA could already be active in Cambodia. It could be the force behind the Sihanouk coup.

If it were not for the dangers implicit in the Sihanouk toppling, it would be pure pleasure to see the clown prince get his due. But there is no comfort in a situation that could bring new conflict and disorder at a time when this nation is attempting to reduce its involvement in the region.

It is a part of the enigma of the area and its inflated importance that the fall of Sihanouk, whose corruption and capriciousness were travesties of leadership, should bear such forebodings for peace.

NEW YORK, N.Y.

POST

MAR 20 1970

E - 708,180

The Widening War

U. S. military officials say flatly that the U. S. could win a "quick military victory" in Vietnam if ground troops were permitted to invade the Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia and Laos.—from yesterday's news pages.

* * *

In the dangerously uncertain hours following the ouster of Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia in a "constitutional coup," there has been some optimistic speculation that the development is welcome from official Washington's point of view. The Pentagon seems to think so—but its responsibility is waging war. The outlook is far different for anyone who cares about peace.

What could be encouraging about the facts that the war in Vietnam blazes on, that the war in Laos is rapidly escalating and that Cambodia is now ruled by a right-wing regime whose professions of adherence to Cambodian neutralism remain to be tested?

No sooner had South Vietnamese President Thieu learned of the coup than he smilingly suggested—obviously recognizing kindred spirits in Pnom Penh—that joint military operations against the Communists might be in order. He graciously included references to an older ally—the U. S.

Is Washington really prepared to

take on new clients in Cambodia? Isn't one Thieu far more than enough? What application does President Nixon propose to make of the "Nixon Doctrine" for progressive military disengagement now? Does the siren-song of "quick military victory" really sound appealing?

So far, Washington has done nothing more publicly than to "recognize" the new Cambodian regime—on the ground that Sihanouk's removal was constitutionally carried out. What role, if any, the U. S. intelligence apparatus actually played in the process is not known but the CIA has scarcely been unobtrusive in South Vietnam and Laos and it is hard to believe it was missing in action in Cambodia.

The crucial question is whether Washington will attempt once more in Indochina to regulate events which threaten to pass beyond its control and whether the Vietnam quagmire will extend itself deeper into Laos and Cambodia. That would not herald "quick victory" but a new, wider, dead-end war.

19 MAR 1970

STATINTL

LAOS STRONGHOLD APPARENTLY LOST

North Vietnamese Capture Meo Headquarters

By PETER J. KUMPA
(Sun Staff Correspondent)

Vientiane, March 18—North Vietnamese Army regulars apparently captured Sam Thong today, one of the twin mountain headquarters strongholds of Meo Gen. Vang Pao, head of the secret CIA-financed army—the last effective fighting force on the government side in Laos.

Evacuation also began at Long Cheng, the long-secret military command post of the Meo general, 18 miles away over a high mountain ridge. Some families and equipment were being moved out by air.

Radio contact with Sam Thong was lost by the Laotian general staff here at about noon today. The last flights two hours earlier brought in ammunition and took out dead and wounded.

Pilots this morning reported seeing the United States Agency for International Development warehouse burning at Sam

Thong, primarily a supply and staging area for Meo refugees. The fire may have been set by rockets from attacking North Vietnamese, softening resistance for their attack.

None of the American advisers who normally stay in Sam Thong were involved in the fighting. They had been evacuated during the past two days.

The attacking North Vietnamese were estimated to number about 5,000 men, most of them from North Vietnamese Army division that had helped recapture the battle-scarred, grassy Plain of Jars earlier this year. About two battalions were striking at Sam Thong itself, while others coming from both North and South were attacking smaller Meo outposts nearby.

Adept As Guerrillas

One informed Meo source here said that Sam Thong had been ordered evacuated early this morning. The tribesmen, who are adept at guerrilla tactics, have not been able to withstand concentrated North Vietnamese attacks.

It is assumed here that Long Cheng will fall shortly. Some American military advisers were predicting three weeks ago that the North Vietnamese would strike at the two bases that endanger North Vietnamese control of the politically and militarily important Plain of Jars region.

It was from these bases that Gen. Vang Pao with heavy American air support launched

his surprise counterattack against extended North Vietnamese troop concentrations last fall and drove them off the plain for the first time in five years.

Now the question that haunts both the Laotian government and the Americans here is whether Gen. Vang Pao and his clandestine army, estimated to vary from 10,000 to 35,000 men, can hold together.

The loss of Long Cheng would be Gen. Vang Pao's most serious. It is a well stocked military counterpart to the civilian operation at Sam Thong.

For periods, the short, 40-year-old Meo general, once a sergeant in the French Army, kept some of his five wives here and held sort of an informal tribal court appointing subleaders for most of the estimated 250,000 Meos in northern Laos.

Psychological Defeat

At the least, he has suffered a severe psychological defeat. With continued heavy American assistance, he could recover, for there are other bases in the high valleys to which he could transfer his operations. It is a costly operation, estimated at about \$150 million a year.

For months before the latest reverses, Gen. Vang Pao already was having trouble finding recruits. The hard core of his army is under 10,000 men. The rest are part-time fighters scattered over dozens of sites, many of them deep in Communist territory.

Rumors again were being resurrected here that the nomadic

Meos might all pick up their few possessions and move to the far west of Laos or even into Thailand.

Over the past 10 years, however, the Meo leader has shown tenacity, coming back when the Communists boasted that he had been defeated.

Viet Cong-Style Tactics

Gen. Vang Pao has fought a hit-and-run guerrilla war for 10 years with American support. From their high ridges behind Communist lines, his men have specialized in Viet Cong-style tactics, laying mines and ambushing convoys.

During the bombing of North Vietnam, it was the Meo tribesmen who defended hilltop installations of radar guiding American planes. From these precarious strips, rescue helicopters took off to pick up pilots downed behind enemy lines.

Some guerrilla activity was extended right into North Vietnam.

Virtually independent of the Vientiane government, Gen. Vang Pao, politically a right-winger, has not been popular with the neutralists. A major general by rank in the Laotian army, he was tolerated for his fighting ability.

If some new coalition government can be formed again through coming exchanges between the Pathet Lao and Vientiane, the Communists can be expected to demand an end to the activities of Vang Pao, their toughest adversary.

19 Mar 1970

STATINTL

War could end -- or spread

Cambodia coup: break for us?

By James McCartney
Chicago Daily News Service

The right-wing military coup in Cambodia—if it is successful—has the potential of changing the ground rules of the Vietnam War.

It could be the biggest break that President Nixon has gotten in trying to end the war.

Or it could lead to a North Vietnamese attempt to take over Cambodia by force, and thus cause a new and different kind of crisis in Vietnam.

U.S. officials do not pretend to know what precisely is happening in Cambodia — or who may wind up in charge. It's too early for that.

But they are certain that the events of the last few days in Cambodia will affect all of Southeast Asia. And they are seeking to weigh alternatives.

Cambodia is important because it has sought, essentially, to remain neutral in struggle for Southeast Asia.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the chief of state who has been ousted, has walked a narrow path — often leaning one way, then the other.

DAILY NEWS Washington Bureau chief Peter Lisagor reports that suspicion that the coup deposing him might be another ruse faded quickly as Southeast Asian experts studied the scant reports monitored on Phnom Penh Radio.

THE JUDGMENT in Washington is that Gen. Lon Nol as premier and his accomplices have entrenched themselves in power, and that the neutralist Sihanouk has been permanently bounced.

This prospect raised apprehensions, described as a "fear of the unknown" by one source, that the rightist anti-Communist successors of Sihanouk might get in over their heads in their defiance of the North Vietnamese.

"If they did that and hol-
lered for help, we might have
a dilemma on our hands," said
one U.S. official.

SIHANOUK has permitted the North Vietnamese to use his country as a sanctuary in mounting attacks on southern South Vietnam. If that ground rule were to be removed, the Communists would be severely crippled.

That would aid President Nixon in de-escalating the war.

Approximately 40,000 main-force North Vietnamese troops are believed to be based in Cambodia, poised to threaten the capital city of Saigon and the rich Mekong Delta to the south.

DAILY NEWS correspondent Milt Freudenheim reports that Paris observers were quick to stress the dangers of a shift to the right in Cambodia. If the weak Cambodian army fails to control the Communist Vietnamese forces, United States forces could be sucked in, as happened in Vietnam and Laos, they warned.

Cambodia also has provided the supply route for Communist forces in southern South Vietnam.

U.S. and South Vietnamese forces have not been able to touch the supply routes — or attack Communist bases — without violating Cambodia's ostensible neutrality.

U.S. MILITARY officials say flatly that the United States could win a "quick military victory" in Vietnam if ground troops were permitted to invade the Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia and Laos.

And officials have not been reluctant to discuss the possi-

troops might try to do the job. No less an official than Defense Sec. Melvin R. Laird has openly discussed this possibility.

That's where the importance of a successful right-wing coup comes into the picture.

If right-wing generals were to gain control in Cambodia and invite the United States to clean out North Vietnamese forces, the temptation to take them up on the offer would be great.

This course of action, no doubt, would cause a political uproar in the United States.

BUT LESS drastic possibilities also are being discussed in official circles here. For example, a right-wing regime in Cambodia might make it possible to freeze supply routes to the Communist forces in Cambodia and South Vietnam.

Supplies for Communist armies in the Mekong Delta have been permitted to flow freely through Cambodian ports.

The United States also might be invited to bomb Communist

sanctuaries in Cambodia. Bombing has not been permitted in Cambodia.

THE OTHER side of the coin presents a different picture.

There is widespread speculation in Saigon and Paris that the United States — probably through the Central Intelligence Agency — has played a role in the Cambodian coup.

Freudenheim reports that French military officials see it as a move to strengthen the position of Thailand in case Laos falls to North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces.

The take-over in Cambodia by Gen. Lon Nol and Sihanouk's rightist relative, Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak, is compared in Paris with the ouster of Indonesian President Sukarno, which the French also credit to the CIA.

The Communists have the military power to respond. They are already in a strong position in Laos, north of Cambodia. They probably could take over all of Cambodia if they wished in a counter attack.

AT THE PARIS Vietnam talks Thursday, Freudenheim reports, North Vietnam accused the United States of trying to spread the Vietnam War into Cambodia and Laos. But Hanoi carefully avoided recognition that Sihanouk has been ousted.

"It is perfectly clear that the Nixon administration, in order to save itself from defeat in Vietnam, not only is escalating the war in Laos but also is trying to extend the war to the whole IndoChinese Peninsula, placing a grave threat to peace in Southeast Asia," Hanoi delegate Nguyen Minh Vy declared.

"The United States must assume full responsibility for the consequences," Vy said as he went into the session.

U.S. Ambassador Philip C. Habib told reporters as he entered the session, "I have no intention of having any comment on Cambodia."

South Vietnamese delegate Pham Dang Lam replied that long-standing North Vietnamese denials that its troops are in Laos and Cambodia have been disproved by recent statements of the neutralist governments of both countries.

19 MAR 1970

Laotians Exit as U.S. Post Falls

VIENTIANE, Laos, March 19 (AP)—A limited withdrawal of civilians and soldiers from army headquarters at Long Cheng began today, after the fall of a nearby United States-operated supply base at Sam Thong to 2,000 North Vietnamese troops.

Informed sources saw the advance on Sam Thong as the first significant North Vietnamese push south of the Plain of Jars since the Geneva agreement in 1962 set up Laos as a neutral state.

Sam Thong, 90 miles north of

Vientiane, is 15 miles southwest of the Plain of Jars.

The plain was recaptured by the North Vietnamese in February. Long Cheng is 10 miles southeast of Sam Thong.

7,000 Meo Soldiers

Gen. Vang Pao, commander of the Meo tribesman army, has his base at Long Cheng and has about 7,000 soldiers standing in the way of an advance. These forces apparently put up little resistance at Sam Thong.

At the Vientiane airport, Air America transport planes unloaded civilians and soldiers from Long Cheng. Most of the

soldiers were in uniform and carrying their weapons. Some were wounded but able to walk.

There was no immediate report on whether United States central intelligence agency personnel who support Vang's army at Long Cheng had left.

Elimination Effort

One source said of the new North Vietnamese thrust, "I think this is his effort to eliminate Sam Thong and Long Cheng, the early phase of it."

Informed sources said the Lao general staff in Vientiane lost radio contact with Sam Thong at noon. Shortly before, ammunition was delivered to the government forces at Sam Thong and the wounded were evacuated.

There were reports that North Vietnamese forces fired rockets into the Sam Thong air field.

Hospital, Warehouse Burn

The sources said allied bombers attacked the high ground around Sam Thong in efforts to drive off the North Vietnamese troops who bypassed government positions farther north to launch their attack. Whether United States war planes, which have been

supporting Laotian troops, took part was not clear.

Pilots flying over Sam Thong reported that a United States warehouse and an American-operated hospital were burning and there were fires in the village. All 16 Americans and more than 2,000 tribesmen and Laotian peasants, including 200 hospital patients, were flown out before the major attack.

The International Control commission, prodded by India, met informally to explore the worsening situation. The sources said the Indian government was attempting a new peace initiative but the meeting produced nothing significant.

The commission made up of India, Canada and Poland, was set up to see that the Geneva agreement was observed. But it has no power and has been denied entry into areas of Laos controlled by the pro-communist Pathet Lao and its North Vietnamese allies.

STATINTL

CIA 'Royal Lao' base falls to patriot front

Daily World Foreign Department

Sam Thong, one of the largest U.S. CIA-"Royal Lao" bases in northern Laos, fell late Tuesday night to the forces of the Lao Patriotic Front.

Officials in Vientiane, the "Royal Lao" capital, said "We don't know exactly where things stand at this point," but added that it was not true that the Sam Thong hospital had been burned down as earlier reported.

The CIA operations base is 75 miles north of Vientiane and about 30 miles southeast of the Plain of Jars, the vital region the LPF recaptured in the last few weeks.

Sam Thong is only six miles from Long Cheng, headquarters and major supply base for the clandestine army of General Vang

Pao, a force of 15,000 Meo tribesmen set up by the CIA. According to U.S. reports, the Sam Thong base was taken almost without a fight from the CIA's secret army.

In past years, when the Meo tribesmen on the U.S. side were confronted with heavy fighting, they melted away by the hundreds, tossing their brand-new M-16 rifles away. The repeated demands of "Royal Lao" Premier Souvanna Phouma last week for new shipments of U.S. weapons may have some relation to this earlier phenomenon.

In Saigon, the U.S. military

command reported the loss of the fifth U.S. warplane over Laos in the last six days to anti-aircraft fire, an Air Force F-105 "Thunderchief" based in Thailand. U.S. sources said all reports indicated the U.S. air losses were at a higher rate than losses over the Democratic Republic of Vietnam before the 1968 "bomb halt."

The U.S. this week admitted that a "North Vietnamese" helicopter that it had earlier said its planes had destroyed on the ground in Laos was in reality an old American type used by the South Vietnamese two years ago.

19 March 1970

STATINTL

Asian Crucible: (I) Cambodia and Laos

South-east Asia is more of an ideological crucible this week than ever; Mr Galbraith's notion that the countries of the area may relapse into the obscurity 'which they deserve' looks singularly unrealistic. The irony is that the fate of the area may be determined more in Laos and Cambodia than in Vietnam itself.

The overthrow of **Prince Sihanouk** bears all the impress of a brilliant intelligence coup. The CIA may be in retreat in Laos; in Cambodia it could well have had a hand in precisely the kind of job which it believes it is meant to do. One domino looks like falling; but another is being shored up.

The net results of the events of the past week are unpredictable but certain lines of speculation are admissible:

(i) *Cambodia*. If the new Cambodian regime cracks down hard on the communists and deprives the North Vietnamese forces (and the Vietcong) of their sanctuaries and supplies, the effect in South Vietnam will be considerable. North Vietnam's use of Cambodian bases, and supplies, has been a factor of enormous importance throughout the war.

(ii) *Laos*. In Laos, the position is very different. North Vietnam is aiming to secure the establishment of a communist-dominated neutralist coalition; it also wants to extract an American pledge not to bomb the Ho Chi Minh trail. If it wins these two points, it would have scored a notable triumph. The creation of a new coalition in Vientiane would be adduced as an adequate precedent for the formation of a coalition in Saigon.

The situation in Laos is now so grave that Mr Rogers, the American Secretary of State, has dropped hints this week that American ground forces may, after all, have to be introduced - but only with the consent of Congress (which will be difficult to secure). It is arguable that, if the Americans were prepared to make a firm stand in Laos, they might carry the day in the whole of south-east Asia. This thesis will doubtless be derided in many quarters; the mere idea of 'another Vietnam' frightens a large sector of American public opinion.

But, while exaggerated importance should not be given to the reported ascendancy of the doves in the Hanoi politburo, it is clear that North Vietnam could not simultaneously (a) continue a losing war in the south, where Vietnamisation has proved more effective than many people forecast, (b) face the sustained hostility of the Cambodian regime, which would harass the Vietcong in various ways, and (c) face in Laos the full brunt of American military might and air power, backed by the Meo tribesmen.

North Vietnam's aim has always been the eventual control of all of former French Indochina, not merely the acquisition of South Vietnam. But it would find it hard to fight in three countries simultaneously.

(iii) *Russia and China*. From the calculations outlined above, it might seem that there is the chance of some kind of deal; but deals in south-east Asia are notoriously difficult to secure. Much will depend on the way Russia and China react to the current crises. As they are in grim competition with each other, as well as with the Americans, their mood is likely to be tough and unyielding; certainly China's. The odds are therefore that (a) if the Cambodian challenge to the communists fails, south-east Asia will become a more intractable, crisis-ridden region than ever, and the communists will step up their efforts to give the Americans a bloody nose in Laos; but (b) if it succeeds, the undermining of North Vietnam's whole strategy may have begun.

PASCO, WASHINGTON
TRI-CITY HERALD

E - 22,733

S - 22,996

MAR 19 1970

Isolation not possible

Sen. J. W. Fullbright's observation that "it is obvious" there is a relationship between the foreign aid program and the Central Intelligence Agency in Laos hardly falls under the category of profound statements.

No one wants Laos to turn into another Vietnam but we frankly don't see how the United States can completely withdraw from the world and go into deep isolation.

It's possible the senator, head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was headline hunting because of his views but the best that can be said is that it was ridiculous for him to say, "If it is true (CIA involvement in Laos), it is only another warning we are in over our heads."

How would he propose that the U.S. help out countries that are being besieged by Communists and facing possible take over? Should we put our head in the sand and bid them adieu? Or possibly send in pacifists and missionaries to convert the communists to anti-war Christians.

Surely his committee gets numerous reports on the subversive activities of other "foreign" powers in Laos and in other nations around the world and it's too much to swallow the possibility that he would be surprised by a report of CIA involvement in Laos.

One can readily agree that the administration shouldn't sneak, slide or allow this country to be pulled into a second Vietnam.

At the same time, however, espionage and assistance in training and recruiting programs are as much a part of the international facts of life as embassies, consulates, diplomatic missions and junketing congressmen.

There is no reason for the U.S. to hang illuminated banners around the necks of our CIA or other agencies proclaiming them as spies, recruiters, trainers, military observers or anything else.

We're all for an ideal world, Mr. Fullbright. Now if you can only convince the other side before we unilaterally give away all of our secrets and confess our "sins."

B-52s in Laos pounding advancing patriots

Daily World Foreign Department

U.S. B-52 bombers and other warplanes were diverted yesterday to missions over northern Laos as two outposts barely six miles away from the U.S. CIA base at Sam Thong fell to the Lao Patriotic Front. Military sources in Saigon said the B-52's made only three raids yesterday over South Vietnam because most of them had been sent over Laos.

Cambodia has suspended its earlier demand that what it alleged to be "North Vietnamese and Vietcong" troops leave Cambodian territory. The change was indicated during a Monday meeting between Cambodian Foreign Minister Norodom Phourisara and representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh.

In Moscow, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia's chief of state, postponed his scheduled departure for Peking on his way home, and in an interview he said: "The events which have just occurred in our country may make some foreign observers think that Cambodia may change its orientation and its ideology. But as head of state I can assure you that we shall not change our principles. We shall keep our neutrality and our independence. The Cambodian people and I personally will not permit any changes concerning our friendship with the socialist camp, especially with the USSR."

Joint communique

Sihanouk met with top-level Soviet officials on Monday, including President Nikolai Podgorny and Premier Alexei Kosygin. The joint Soviet-Cambodian statement at the end of the meeting stated: "The aggression of the American imperialists in Vietnam, armed intervention in Laos, U.S.-Saigon provocations against Cambodia and Cambodian neutrality are the main reasons for the aggravation of the situation in Indochina and in Southeast Asia as a whole."

The Soviet government "again confirmed its respect for the neutrality and territorial integrity of

ent frontiers," and said that Cambodia and Sihanouk "could reply on the Soviet Union's all-round support in the struggle against imperialist provocations, and interference in her affairs."

Cambodia parley

U.S. news sources in Cambodia said that in Monday's Cambodia-DRV-PRG meeting, the two Vietnamese representatives did not discuss the charge of Cambodian Premier Lon Nol's government that NLF and DRV troops were operating on Cambodian territory. The PRG and DRV pledged to respect Cambodia's neutrality, territorial integrity and independence, and also asked for damages to pay for last Wednesday's mob attacks on their two embassies in Phnom Penh.

Informed sources are dubious about General Lon Nol's wild charges that 40,000 DRV and NLF troops are in Cambodia, a charge that U.S.-Saigon military propaganda has been making for several years. In the Nov. 16, 1969, Washington Post, Canadian General Donald Ketcheson gave some reasons why.

Gen. Ketcheson, a member of

the International Control Commission (ICC) on Vietnam, admitted that he "passed on" information to the U.S. CIA. The Canadian officer said the CIA would come to him claiming that "an entire Vietcong corps" was in a certain border area, and Ketcheson said he would disagree "but very often they chose to believe their own spies."

A report in the Feb. 26 issue of the conservative "Far Eastern Economic Review" (Hong Kong) says that a reporter who traveled all over Svay Rieng province in Cambodia, where the U.S. and Saigon say thousands of "Vietcong" are hiding, found it to be an absolutely flat, almost treeless area surrounded on three sides by South Vietnamese territory, where nothing could be hidden from patrolling U.S. aircraft.

DES MOINES, IOWA
TRIBUNE

E - 113,781
MAR 18 1970

Bombing Nuisance

We were thinking that American control of the air over Laos was completely useless when Russia suddenly said there could be no negotiations for peace in Laos unless the United States first stopped the bombing.

Does that sound familiar? It should. That was the Russian and North Vietnamese cry for the years when the United States was bombing North Vietnam.

Air power is something Americans find it easy to believe in. Yet the heavy bombing of the Ho Chi Minh trail does not seem to affect the traffic there. Bombing interferes some, but North Vietnam just takes its losses and goes on sending what it chooses.

Support bombing in the Plain of Jars and points east and west seems singularly ineffective, too. It may have helped with the surprise victory last fall when Gen. Vang Pao's clandestine army of Meo tribesmen, payrolled by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, reconquered the plain from its foes. But this winter North Vietnam reconquered the plain again and pushed on beyond it, using a large force of regulars complete with tanks and artillery — a roadbound outfit ideal for bombing.

U.S. planes were able to fly out the entire civilian population in advance of the attack, and do heavy support bombing of the invading force, plus at least one day of heavy area bombing with the big B-52 bombers. But the North Vietnamese swept the plain with very little resistance.

Yet it must have had some nuisance value. The Russians want it stopped.

NEW YORK, N.Y.
POST

E - 708,180

MAR 18 1970

Where Do We Go From Laos?

A great many Americans have been wondering for some time just what the U.S. was doing in Laos—and why. Perhaps it is heartening that high officials of the Nixon Administration seem to be equally puzzled and as much at a loss for a convincing explanation.

The escalating confusion dates generally from President Nixon's report on Laos two weeks ago, a somewhat incomplete accounting of the facts and a wholly implausible justification of U.S. involvement there. More recently, the Administration indicated it was definitely not relying on the Tonkin Gulf resolution for authority and professed to be neutral on a new Senate resolution relating to use of combat troops in Laos.

In the latest development, Chairman Fulbright (D-Ark.) of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reports that Secretary of State Rogers insisted at a recent closed-door hearing that there are not only "no present plans" to commit ground troops but that the Administration will not do so—at least without explicit Congressional sanction—even if Laos "is overrun" by Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese.

That seemingly leaves few options for Washington except to ground the U.S. bombers making daily sorties in support of Lao government troops and to bring military "advisers" home. Is anything of the kind in prospect? Or will our presence there henceforth become a total CIA operation? Is there any ceiling on the CIA force?

Rogers and Fulbright Attempt To Clarify U.S. Stand on Laos

By RICHARD HALLORAN
 Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 17 — Secretary of State William P. Rogers and Senator J. W. Fulbright sought today to soften the impact of Mr. Rogers's assertion that the United States has no present plans to send ground combat troops to Laos if that country should be overrun by Communist forces.

Senator Fulbright, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, revealed yesterday that, in a closed session of the committee on March 3, Mr. Rogers said of Laos: "We have no present plans, if it is overrun, to use combat troops."

Both men emphasized today that it had been Mr. Rogers's intention to stress the "no present plans" and to assure the Congress that none would be made by the Administration without seeking Congressional approval.

Mr. Rogers said that "if a situation should arise that would require consideration of combat forces in Laos, I told the Senate of the United States that we would consult with them to the fullest extent possible."

The Secretary, in a televised interview on the National Broadcasting Company's "Today" show, said he had explained to the Foreign Relations Committee "that I was not in

a position to foreclose the President in making any decision which might be required in the future."

A spokesman for the Secretary said that Mr. Rogers, in his remarks, had been trying to soften the impact of the March 3 statement.

In a telephone interview, Senator Fulbright said he had talked with Mr. Rogers this afternoon to explain the circumstances under which the statement had been made public. He said the disclosure had "not involved security" and was "not intended to embarrass the Secretary."

Senator Fulbright said he thought the "small incident" had been "grossly exaggerated" and indicated that there was no disagreement between Mr. Rogers and himself.

Conflict in Views Seen

The quotation from Mr. Rogers came up yesterday while the Under Secretary of State, Elliot L. Richardson, was testifying before the Foreign Relations Committee. Senators John F. Williams, Republican of Delaware, and Clifford P. Case, Republican of New Jersey, thought that Mr. Richardson had differed from Secretary Rogers on how fully the Congress would be consulted prior to any decision to send troops to Laos.

They asked to see the transcript of the testimony that Mr. Rogers gave on March 3. After consultation with Senator Fulbright, they asked him to read from the transcript. That produced the quotation in question.

Mr. Rogers's statements on television this morning, how-

ever, appeared to put him at some variance with the Secretary of Defense, Melvin R. Laird. On Feb. 26, Mr. Laird told newsmen that if President Nixon decided to send troops to Laos, "he would come to the Congress of the United States for such approval."

Spokesmen for the State and Defense Departments were unable to reconcile the use of "consult" and "approval." Each said his department stood by what its Secretary had said.

The issue of the political and military conditions under which American soldiers might be sent to Laos came against a backdrop of intensified North Vietnamese action in that country.

A State Department spokesman, Carl Bartsch, told newsmen that the military situation in Laos was serious. He confirmed that the North Vietnamese had taken several hill-top outposts around the Royal Laotian forces headquarters at Sam Thong and Long Tieng.

Objective Uncertain

Mr. Rogers said that the ultimate North Vietnamese objective was not known. "We hope that what they are up to is to make their negotiating position a little stronger," he said in his television appearance. "We hope that they do not intend to overrun Laos."

Other officials here said they believed the North Vietnamese forces were moving in for the kill against the clandestine army of Maj. Gen. Vang Pao, the force trained and supplied by the United States Central Intelligence Agency. General Vang Pao's army has provided the only substantial opposition to the North Vietnamese in Laos for several years.

The officials also said they had received no word on when the courier with negotiating proposals from Prince Souphanouvong, the leader of North Vietnam's Pathet Lao allies, might be expected to reach Vientiane, the administrative capital of Laos.

Prince Souphanouvong has broadcast his intention of sending a messenger with proposals for negotiations. The broadcasts have indicated that the Communists want a cease-fire, withdrawal of American military support of the Laotian Government, a new coalition in Vientiane and the halt of all American bombing of the North Vietnamese supply trail through Eastern Laos.

STATINTL

U.S. Expresses Concern Over Red Drive in Laos Major Drive Feared

By Murrey Marder
Washington Post Staff Writer

New Communist thrusts in Laos are the kickoff for the second-stage offensive aimed at the American-supported "clandestine" army of Gen. Vang Pao, U.S. sources said yesterday.

Communist troops, led by North Vietnamese forces, have moved back on the offensive while the Communist side is holding out the prospects of Laotian talks limited to opposing forces. The United States Embassy in Vientiane described the military situation as "serious."

American sources said what has happened is what they pessimistically expected: a drive to recapture the Plain of Jars, which was recovered last month; next, an offensive to destroy the ability of Vang Pao's army to wage war in central and northern Laos, which is now beginning.

Advance Communist troops today moved beyond the Plain of Jars to capture Sam Thong and threaten Long Cheng. Gen Pao's headquarters are at Long Cheng, which newsmen on the scene have described as the off-limits center for American supply, finance and military advisory operations for Pao's forces, run by the Central Intelligence Agency.

U.S. sources said that at Sam Thong evacuations began two days ago and the post had been "stripped down" to "a resistance force."

State Department Press Officer Carl E. Bartsch said: "Our embassy in Vientiane has reported that the military situation is serious around the Royal Lao Government regional headquarters at Sam Thong and Long Cheng."

Secretary of State William P. Rogers was asked on NBC's "Today" show yesterday for his evaluation of enemy intentions.

Rogers said, "It's a little early to tell... We hope that what they are up to is to make their negotiating position a little stronger. We hope that they do not intend to overrun Laos."

The secretary was asked if the United States, in effect, had bitten off "more than we could chew" by having "prompted" anti-Communist Laotian forces "to overrun the Plain of Jars last fall," bringing on the Communist "counter-reaction."

"I don't think it's accurate to say that we prompted them to do that," said Rogers. "We advised them to go into the Plain of Jars, but I'm not sure we gave them any advice to overrun it." It was "rather unexpected," said Rogers, that the Laotian forces would be "so successful" there.

Rogers denied an interpretation in some reports yesterday that two weeks ago he assured the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the United States will not send troops into Laos "even if it is overrun by Communists." Committee Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), on his own, made part of the Rogers' testimony public Monday.

"I didn't say that," said

Rogers. "I said there are no present plans to use combat forces in Laos. I also explained to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that I was not in a position to foreclose the President in making any decision which might be required in the future."

"We have no present plans to use ground combat forces in Laos," said Rogers. "If that should change, if a situation should arise that would require consideration of combat forces in Laos, I told the Senate of the United States that we would consult with them to the fullest extent possible."

The key qualification about "no present plans" also was in the position of Rogers' made public Monday.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) said yesterday, "The warning flags are flying in the Senate on Laos."

Mansfield said at an American Paper Industry convention in New York "we must not only avoid a new entanglement in Laos but... we must redouble the effort to get our heads above water again in Vietnam."

He urged President Nixon to send a high-ranking representative back to the deadlocked Paris talks on Vietnam. Mansfield also proposed a "revival of the Geneva Conference of 1961-62 on Laos," broadened enough "to consider the situation of all of Indochina and the Southeast Asian mainland." The call for such a conference, said Mansfield, could also propose "a foreign ministers' meeting in order to register its urgency."

STATINTL

Communists Take Key Laos Outpost

VIENTIANE, Laos (AP) — Another major Laotian government position fell to the Communists today with little or no resistance as North Vietnamese troops overran the supply base at Sam Thong and burned the adjoining village and the hospital the Americans operated. "This may signal the initial thrust southward," a source in Vientiane commented after the North Vietnamese victory 90 miles north of the capital.

As the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao drew close to Sam Thong yesterday, the CIA's Air America charter line flew out the 15 to 20 Americans stationed there along with more than 2,000 Meo tribesmen and Laotian peasants, another fled earlier in the week as the Communist troops moved down from the Plain of Jars, 15 miles to the northeast.

3 Wounded

The Laotian government's chief military hope, Gen. Vang Pao, reportedly had a force of about 7,000 Meo tribesmen in the area from Sam Thong to Vang Pao's headquarters at Long Chien, 10 miles to the southeast.

But the casualty report from the defenders at Sam Thong—three wounded—indicated resistance was negligible, as it has been since the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao began their offensive northeast of the Plain of Jars nearly five weeks ago.

There were unconfirmed reports of North Vietnamese military activity today in the vicinity of Long Chien. Meanwhile, bombers from either the Laotian or U.S. air forces attacked an estimated 2,000 North Vietnamese troops reported to be on high ground overlooking Sam Thong, according to informed sources.

A Wedding Amidst War

Sam Thong was a supply base for Vang Pao's army and an estimated 100,000 refugees from areas taken over by the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao. The base included an airstrip, a U.S. aid warehouse and hangars for Air America planes, as well as the hospital.

Sources in Vientiane said the attack on Sam Thong was the first since the base was built in 1959. It was not threatened when

the North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao occupied the Plain of Jars before being driven out by Vang Pao's forces last summer.

Despite the North Vietnamese advance south, life went on as usual in Vientiane. The big event yesterday was the wedding of Prince Panya Souvanna Phouma, 26-year-old son of Premier Souvanna Phouma, to Salika Sidhisari Putra, 22-year-old daughter of a wealthy Thai family. The Buddhist ceremony was held at the premier's villa.

Enemy Downs 4th Plane

In Saigon, the U.S. Command said an Air Force F105 jet fighter was hit by enemy ground fire while on a combat mission over Laos Monday. The plane crashed in Thailand, and the pilot was rescued with no injuries, a spokesman said.

It was the fourth American warplane reported downed by enemy ground fire in Laos since the U.S. Command started announcing losses there on March 10.

A fifth plane crashed due to unknown causes, the spokesman said. The crewmen aboard all the planes were rescued, he added.

ARTICLE, TEX.
REPORTER NEWS

M - 42,542

S - 53,505

MAR 17 1970

President's Best Weapon In Laos Affair Is Candor

President Nixon has been put in an awkward position by a bit of Pentagon semantics.

On March 6, in his statement on Laos, the President said flatly that "no American stationed in Laos has ever been killed in ground combat operations."

It has since become known that 27 Americans — including an Army captain — have died as a result of "hostile action" on the ground in Laos. The other 26 were civilians, one a dependent of a civilian. Presumably most of them were CIA men, who have trained the Laotian army.

A White House spokesman said Nixon did not know of the captain's death when he made his statement. The spokesman, however, stuck with the "hostile action" definition, saying the captain died in an enemy attack behind the lines and thus was not in a "ground combat operations." He would not discuss the other deaths due to "hostile action."

The Army captain apparently presumed he was in combat. He shot and killed one Communist attacker before he was gunned down. The matter of definition is moot for him and the other 26.

The President's efforts to clarify the American involvement in Laos have been damaged by these belated disclosures. The attempt to stick by the original statement by playing with words only makes matters worse. We cannot buy the distinction between hostile action and combat operations. If our people are close enough to the Reds to be killed by them, they are in combat.

We hope the President is upset with the Pentagon word game. This episode leads us to wonder what else he had not been told before he made his statement on Laos. We assume he is busy finding out all he needs to know and will tell the public when he does.

obtained by sending 25¢ ppd. to Sufism Reoriented, Inc., 1290 Sutter St., San Francisco, Calif. 94109.)

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"Attack" a publication of the New York State Narcotic Addiction Control Commission is available through the New York State NACC, Albany, New York 12203.

Cohen, Sidney (1968) The Drug Dilemma. MacMillan, New York.

Mad Magazine (1968) Turn On, Tune In, Drop Dead. Mad Magazine, No. 118 (April 1968). 30¢ plus 25¢ for orders under \$2,000 for postage and packaging. 485 Madison Ave., New York, New York 10022.

Mental Health Digest. For requests for issues and information regarding subscriptions to the Mental Health Digest, write the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Subscription price, \$3.50 a year; single copy 30¢.

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Wolfe, T. (1969) Electric Kool Aid Acid Test Bantam Books, N.Y. (95¢) (realistic account of the drug scene in the mid-1960's).

Films—For information regarding films and film rentals, write University of California Extension Media Center Distribution, Berkeley, California 94720. Also write Professional Arts, Inc., P.O. Box 8484, Universal City, California 91608 for information regarding "Escape to Nowhere", "Pot's a Put-On" (a brief satirical put-down of pot), "The Ballad of Mary Jane," and other films.

Recording—"Talking Drug Store Rag" by Hank Mindlin and Carol-Leigh Jensen on S. & S. Records—album "Inquire Within" Available through Sufism Reoriented, Inc., 1290 Sutter St., S.F., Calif. 94109. \$4.98 plus 25¢ handling. (California residents add 25¢ sales tax.)

AGENCY REFERRAL AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

For referrals in the San Francisco Bay Area contact the Bay Area Social Planning Council; 577 14th St., Oakland, Calif. 94612. 835-2440.

In California, a listing by county of Drug Abuse Treatment and Referral Facilities Facilities may be obtained by writing to Mr. Chester Roberts, Jr., Division of Research, Department of the Youth Authority, 915 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, Calif. 95814.

For information regarding an experimental prevention program stressing positive alternatives to drug use, write awareness House, Bryce Brooks, Director, P. O. Box 515, Fort Bragg, Ca. 95437. Also see Life Magazine, "A Town in Trouble", March 21, 1969, for further information regarding this program.

For information regarding a successful educational program for young, first time drug offenders and their parents, write San Diego County Probation Department, William M. Sergeant, Supervising Probation Officer, 2901 Meadow Lark Drive, San Diego, Ca. 92123. (Participation in an entire series of educational programs is in lieu of prosecution.) (Copies of a program summary are also available through C.P.D.I.* Please include 25¢ to cover costs of printing and handling.)

For a 19-page booklet entitled "Program Objectives—Narcotics, Drug & Alcohol Abuse Task Force", write California Council on Criminal Justice, Sate Capitol, Sacramento, Ca. 95814.

FOOTNOTE

* Please enclose a large-self addressed stamped envelope with all requests. Financial contributions are essential to the expansion of the work of the Committee. For all requests and for further information regarding the activities of the Committee, please write: Committee for Psychedelic Drug Information, P. O. Box 851, Berkeley, California 94701.

CREDIBILITY AND LAOS

HON. SPARK M. MATSUNAGA

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 1970

Mr. MATSUNAGA. Mr. Speaker, more and more Americans are becoming concerned over the credibility gap which is becoming increasingly evident in the declarations of the present administration.

The Honolulu Star-Bulletin, normally a Republican-oriented daily newspaper in Hawaii, has joined those who are beginning to raise questions about what President Nixon says and does. It warns the President of the dangers of widening the credibility gap with reference to Laos.

The Star-Bulletin editorial of March 9, 1970, is submitted at this point for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

CREDIBILITY AND LAOS

Almost from the beginning of our involvement in South Vietnam, the Johnson administration suffered from a credibility gap. Partly it could not be helped; the military commanders of a nation at war do not telegraph their punches. But it resulted also in

large part because of President Johnson's penchant for secrecy and because he did not take Congress into his confidence.

This latter lack was perhaps most productive of all in stretching the gap so far as the general public was concerned. Even some members of Congress who voted for the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, preeminently among them Sen. J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, claimed they had been duped.

Since leaving office Johnson has claimed that the reason he asked for the Resolution which authorized him to take all steps necessary to prevent "aggression," was that he feared a declaration of war might project Red China into the conflict. He has pointed out that certain treaties between China and North Vietnam might have automatically made China a combatant, whether it wished to be or not.

But, taking the former President at his word, the fact remains that the country as a whole did not realize the extent to which it had been committed until it had become an accomplished fact. Then the din of protest rose louder and louder until finally Johnson was forced from office and his party lost the presidential election.

It would seem that, with his predecessor's disaster so freshly before him, and because of his own undisputed sagacity, President Nixon would take all steps necessary to avoid a credibility gap of his own with respect to Laos. Yet in some respects the Laos situation is worse than Vietnam was in the beginning, some five years ago.

In a 3,000-word statement issued Friday, Mr. Nixon said reports that Americans are engaged in ground fighting and that increased U.S. air combat in Laos is escalating that conflict are "grossly inaccurate." Yet the fact is that, regardless of the degree of fighting or escalation, the President was officially confirming for the first time what has been an open secret for months—that Americans are fighting in Laos.

In a further obvious contradiction, Mr. Nixon declared that, as evidence that Americans are not "directly" involved in combat operations, "no American stationed in Laos has ever been killed" in six years by the enemy.

But at the same time the White House confirmed that American casualties in the air over Laos have risen to about 400 over the six years, including 193 individuals presumed captured or listed as missing.

Furthermore, said Mr. Nixon, and these are his words, he has "no plans for introducing ground combat forces into Laos."

This resort to technicalities of language in an effort to stay within the framework of fact may in the end set the same kind of trap for Mr. Nixon as his predecessor set for himself. If what we are doing in Laos is the concern of the American people—and of course it is—why are American newsmen barred from entering the combat zones?

The American involvement, the CIA's army of mercenaries hired to fight the Communist Pathet Lao and now, presumably, the invading North Vietnamese, who are supposed to have 67,000 troops in the country, has been going on for a long time. But under the terms of the Geneva agreement we were not supposed to be there, so it was not admitted in Washington that we were.

In his message Mr. Nixon appealed to the Soviet Union to use its good offices with Hanoi to refrain from aggravating the situation. The record of such appeals with respect to South Vietnam is such that we can hardly rely on the Russians to help us now. Are we or are we not going to fight to save Laos from the Communists, as we did in South Vietnam? That is the question that the President, sooner or later, must answer.

Laos Bobble Shows Flaw in Data Channel

BY DON IRWIN
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — A bureaucratic bobble that kept the White House uninformed of an Army captain's death in Laos points up the fallibility of the machinery that funnels data into the presidential decision-making process.

President Nixon relied on that machinery for preparation of the March 6 statement on Laos—a major effort to reassure the public that U.S. activities there are limited. But while Mr. Nixon strove to close a major credibility gap, he inadvertently opened a narrow one.

There is a computer-like quality in the machinery that informs the President. It answers the questions that are asked of it. The White House sought facts to quash charges that Laotian operations are escalating. It overlooked one pertinent followup question and nobody anywhere along the long bureaucratic line volunteered the information.

Informed officials say the President knew that some Americans stationed in Laos had been killed by enemy action but believed none were military men. They insist that neither he nor his top advisers were aware that Capt. Joseph K. Bush Jr., an assistant military attache stationed at Muong Sul, Laos, had died in a skirmish on Feb. 10, 1969.

Nixon Statement

If the White House had known that an Army officer was counted among the less than 50 officially admitted fatalities to Americans stationed in Laos, the President's statement probably would not have said without qualification: "No American stationed in Laos has ever been killed in ground combat operations."

A day after its publication, the sentence was called into question by an article in The Times. Bush, the article said, died in a wild exchange of fire with North Vietnamese commandos who raided the compound where he was on duty.

White House spokesmen confirmed the report but maintained that Bush was not involved in a "ground combat operation." He was, they said, fighting off an assault on his post of duty.

Mr. Nixon's March 6 statement was authorized at a Feb. 27 meeting of the National Security Council.

Voluminous information was supplied by the State and Defense departments. Facts from other offices certainly included the Central Intelligence Agency. The NSC staff assembled the report from this data with assistance from top presidential aides and Mr. Nixon himself.

Information Incomplete

With all this backup, how was it possible that none of the drafters knew that an Army captain was among the casualties in Laos?

The foulup resulted directly, sources say, from the data supplied to the White House by the State and Defense departments. Nowhere was a military casualty flagged among the Americans listed as killed on the ground in Laos.

It may be that Bush's diplomatic status as an assistant attache helped obscure his military commission. It has been policy for more than six years to keep the record of U.S. activity in Laos as cloudy as possible.

Administration officials say that they are genuinely unable to state precisely the number of Americans stationed in Laos who have died there because "various reporting procedures" have been used since U.S. operations began in Laos.

There is reason to believe these procedures were used to conceal casualties sustained in Laos among figures announced for forces in Thailand and South Vietnam. (Capt. Bush's GI tombstone says he died in Vietnam.)

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MAR 17 1970

McCartney in Laos, Shhh . . .

Everything Is Secret About

By JAMES MCCARTNEY
Inquirer Washington Bureau
VIENTIANE, Laos, March 16 —There's nothing quite like a secret war.

Just about everybody in the world who is interested knows about the war in Laos — and U. S. involvement in it.

But U. S. Embassy officials here are forced, by Washington, to pretend that it's a figment of somebody's imagination.

Officials look blankly at the wall when questions are asked. They pretend that they can't find papers with fact and figures.

One even went so far on one occasion as to rummage through a waste basket, saying: "I know those figures are here somewhere." He didn't find them.

Officials cooperate with one another in plots to discourage reporters.

If a reporter tries to conduct a serious in depth interview, phones keep ringing and other Embassy officials

keep barging into the room, changing the subject.

Then they'll hang around for half an hour and talk about football — anything but the war.

If reporters demand to go places and see things, they don't get far. Not without an escort. Some even have been arrested.

The press is given carefully planned government "tours" of battle areas. The tours are staged so carefully to conceal what is going on, that even the officials can't keep from kidding about it.

Reporters aren't permitted to go to bases from which U. S. planes are flying. Many government employees here have been instructed not to talk to reporters at all.

Officials go to elaborate lengths to conceal the presence of U. S. military personnel by requiring all of the military — captains, majors, colonels — to dress in civilian clothes.

More than a few of the military are carried on payrolls as members of the staff of the Agency for International Development.

Some government officials are fed up with the position in which they have been placed. They don't like to lie and misrepresent, but they haven't been given a choice.

"Everything is secret," says one. "I mean, they classify everything."

"You can't even find out what the guy in the next office does."

"Everybody thinks everybody else may be a member of the CIA. When somebody new comes in, everybody whispers, 'he must be a spook.'"

A spook is a member of the CIA.

All this quite frequently results in the ridiculous.

For example, texts of Washington press conferences have been sent to the Embassy here marked "classified." So have newspaper clippings.

One Embassy official was invited to a secret meeting and nobody would tell him where it was to be held.

Not knowing where to go, he missed it.

Weekly "military" briefings are something close to a farce. A lieutenant colonel was assigned to conduct last week's briefing.

"I'm not going to comment on air operations," he said blandly.

"First, I don't know anything about air operations and, second, I'm not supposed to."

The major U. S. involvement in the war, of course, is in air operations.

"Are you allowed to discuss American bombing?" the colonel was asked.

"No," he said.

Thus, although the broad outlines of U. S. involvement now are quite well understood, many details remain unclear.

It is clear, however, that the United States is bombing heavily the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Eastern Laos, but it is not clear how much bombing has been done elsewhere.

Officials acknowledge one series of B-52 raids on the Plain of Jars, but then clam up. The full story of U. S. bombing has not been told.

It is clear that the United States is operating a guerilla army under the direction of the CIA, but not clear exactly how deeply involved U. S.

personnel are in combat.

It is clear that the United States is furnishing tactical air support to the Laotian army, but not clear on what scale.

It is clear that two CIA connected airlines—Air America and Continental Air Services—are carrying troops and supplies for the Laotian Army but not clear why this should be covert.

What's happening, of course, is that both sides in this war are lying or at least concealing the full truth.

The Communists don't admit violating the Geneva agreements of 1962 by putting troops into Laos—and the United States doesn't admit it has violated the agreements by conducting a secret war.

The fiction is maintained in the hope that the agreements may be preserved as a basis for an eventual settlement.

Who loses?

The taxpayer. He pays the bills—and doesn't know what he's buying.

Frank Mankiewicz and Tom Braden

Vietnam, Laos Must Be Faced Without Using CIA as a Scapegoat

STATINTL

BEFORE RISING congressional temper about the presence of Americans in Laos runs its course, fault is certain to be laid at the doorstep of the Central Intelligence Agency. In part, this is because the agency cannot answer back.

But the CIA is also a convenient target because it has become a synonym on the far, far left for everything wrong with our foreign policy and inimical to our ideals. Some academic circles will believe anything about the CIA provided it conforms to the picture of a department of government out of control, responsible to none and bent upon destroying democracy all over the world.

In the argument over Laos, there are points to be won on the issue of secrecy—and the bewildering and contradictory communiques from the White House over casualties. But there are also—alas—points to be won by suggesting that our difficulties in Laos are the responsibility of the CIA. And it is this easy argument which is refuted by an examination of recent history.

We are in Laos, so history tells us, because President Eisenhower ordered us there and Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon acquiesced in turn. Thus, no partisan points can be scored by those who wish we weren't there and who fear the consequences.

In fact, it was John F. Kennedy who put the CIA into Laos to replace some 800 American military advisers, ordered out by the Geneva Accords of 1962. It became immediately clear that North Vietnam had no intention of withdrawing its troops though many were put into civilian clothes. On a much reduced scale, the



Mankiewicz Braden

United States did the same thing.

Both the United States and North Vietnam then proceeded to aid "their" side of South Vietnam from the Laotian sanctuary. The North Vietnamese used Laos for a supply and regrouping area, and we used its airfields as bomber bases.

SO THE TROUBLE with Laos is Vietnam. The two cannot be separated. Yet a discussion of the CIA role in Laos is instructive if only because it proves what Vietnam proves—that a tiny commitment has a way of growing.

CIA's intelligence job in Laos was relatively simple—to count the number of men coming down the long jungle paths from the north. The operations job was more difficult and more important—to preserve the Laotian government as one that would continue to ask us to bomb the trail in southern Laos.

If we couldn't bomb the trail, the war in Vietnam—it was thought—would be immensely more difficult, though, as CIA officials have privately conceded for some time, the bombing in Laos isn't working any better than it did in North Vietnam.

But in order to preserve a Laotian government which would ask us to bomb its

country, the CIA had to find an army. A local strong man was ready to provide one—and so the escalation began—armies provoke armies. When CIA's army got strong enough to drive the Pathet Lao out of the Plain of Jars, the North Vietnamese began a counter buildup. By last year they were able to put 25,000 additional men into the field and drive CIA into the corner in which we now live in Laos.

It is not a comfortable corner. The possibility of a deal between the Laotian government and the Pathet Lao would revoke our permission to bomb the trail—or to use Laotian territory at all.

The moralistic bombast of John Foster Dulles brought us into Vietnam. That error—continued on a low level by Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy—was compounded by Lyndon Johnson's attempt to make that moralistic bombast—"aggression," "the Free World"—a basis for all-out war. And Richard Nixon now has the job of trying to get American troops off that sticky ground. It has been a mistake—a ghastly mistake—but it must be faced squarely and not blamed on the CIA.

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Autostradas Growing

ROME, March 16—Italian autostradas—expressways—now stretch a total of 2,225 miles, according to official figures released here today. The figure represents a 300 per cent increase over the expressway network in use eight years ago.

The possibility of a deal between the Laotian government and the Pathet Lao would revoke our permission to bomb the trail—or to use Laotian territory at all.

Hanoi Opens New Drives In the North

By TAMMY ARBUCKLE

Special to the Star

VIENTIANE — North Vietnamese forces launched new thrusts in northern Laos today directed at the outer defenses of U.S. and Meo guerrilla bases in Sam Thong and Long Chien, 100 miles north of Vientiane.

(Wire service reports indicated that some Americans—perhaps a dozen—were being evacuated from Sam Thong.)

Meo guerrillas in the hills around Tha Tam Bleung, 5 miles northeast of Sam Thong, woke up this morning to find North Vietnamese troops occupying Tha Tam airstrip.

The Communist forces took Phou Pa Xai outpost a few miles east of Sam Thong after a brief fight at 4 a.m., the Lao military said.

A Communist commando squad threw satchel charges at a U.S. generator outpost 5 miles southeast of Long Chien.

7 Battalions Involved

Reliable military sources said seven battalions of Hanoi's 316th Division were involved in the advance on Sam Thong. This means between 2,000 and 3,000 troops.

Air America today evacuated more than 200 government wounded from Sam Thong hospital as a precaution in the event the base falls. Fifty-six of these were seriously wounded troops from this morning's fighting which was described by the military as "spotty."

The Communist thrust against the U.S.-guerrilla bases represents a new Communist move in the Laos war.

Previous Communist attacks have been confined to retaking areas held by the Communists when the 1962 Geneva Accords were signed. The Sam Thong-Long Chien thrust means that the Communists are attacking areas held by the government in 1962.

Meo refugees today were reported to be walking into Sam Thong from fallen outposts.

There have been approximately 70 Americans in the Sam Thong-Long Chien area, including one woman.

The figure includes eight workers for the U.S. Agency for International Development, 12 Air America employees at Sam Thong and between 40 and 50 others — CIA and military advisers, communications experts, prisoner interrogators and Air Force men.

The Americans are armed with M16 rifles and captured Communist AK47 submachine-guns.

Long Chien houses sophisticated American communications equipment.

The North Vietnamese military aim — if the present thrust continues — would be to smash the U.S.-supported Meo guerrillas headed by Gen. Vang Pao. With American backing, Vang Pao has held off the North Vietnamese for eight years with the loss of at least 15,000 men on each side.

Informed sources said the thrust is timed to coincide with the Communist call for political talks with Premier Souvanna Phouma's government.

"It's part of the Communists' old talk-fight policy," sources said, explaining that the destruction of Vang Pao would so seriously weaken the forces of neutralist Souvanna Phouma that he would be forced to make concessions to the Reds at the bargaining table.

The Pathet Lao have offered a five-point peace plan but have not yet sent an emissary to Vientiane with the proposal.

The Pathet Lao radio said today, however, that the emissary had left "the liberated zone" but gave no destination for him.

If the North Vietnamese take Long Thien, they will be within 20 miles of an American-built road leading to Vientiane, the administrative capital.

Also, the troops of Gen. Kouprasith Abhay at Sala Phou Khoun, 150 miles north of here, will be cut off by road from Military Region 5 including the capital defense for which the general is responsible.

U.S. Defenders' Last Stand in Laos Told

Dozen Die in Attack on Secret Radar Site in 1968

BY T. D. ALLMAN

Exclusive to The Times from the Washington Post

VIENTIANE, Laos—More than a dozen Americans were killed in Laos two years ago in defense of a secret American installation which assisted U.S. bombings of North Vietnam.

The costly engagement two years ago, according to long-time Laos residents, occurred when more than a dozen Americans were killed defending an American radar reconnaissance, and rescue base in extreme northeastern Laos. The installation, called Phou Pha Thi, guided U.S. aircraft to their targets and electronically released their bomb loads by radio impulse.

The base, as described by a variety of Americans and Laotians here who visited it, was like something out of a Ian Fleming novel.

Phou Pha Thi is a 5,860-foot mountain, 190 miles northeast of Vientiane and about 160 miles west of Hanoi, in Communist-dominated Sam Neua province.

"Phou" is the Laotian word for mountain. Phou Pha Thi is one of the highest and most isolated mountains in the hill country northeast. It lies within 15 miles of the North Vietnamese frontier in a province which was granted to the Communist Pathet Lao in 1954.

Exotic telecommunications equipment, including radar nets, dotted Phou Pha Thi and several nearby hills. American Air Force and Central Intelligence Agency personnel used a valley landing strip as the base for American-led teams of Meo mercenaries entering North Vietnam on special harassment missions.

Phou Pha Thi rises up sheer on three sides. The fourth side, steep but negotiable, descends more than 1,600 feet into a valley.

Surveys Completed

In August, 1964, following the Gulf of Tonkin incident, according to reliable American sources an able American source completed surveys of north-east Laos. Their surveys' principal objective, according to the sources: to find areas in Laos close to the North Vietnamese border where the Vietnamese border force attempted to destroy that could be used to support the American AN-2s, vintage Soviet aircraft which carried about 10 passengers at a speed of less than 200 m.p.h.

The sources say construction of the Phou Pha Thi installation was begun in late 1964. The mountain had obvious strategic advantages. On three sides it was impregnable. On the fourth, it faced a narrow valley where a 700-foot-long landing strip was built. Its proximity to North Vietnam and its commanding heights made it ideal for radar guidance systems and as a base for rescue helicopters, which were used to save American pilots downed by anti-aircraft fire in North Vietnam.

The main American headquarters was in a deep limestone cavern near the mountain's summit. Inside the cavern were control consoles for the electronic equipment and a situation room. Living quarters were in a nearby concrete bunker. The entire complex was ringed with clandestine army positions, directed by American personnel in cooperation with Meo officers paid by the CIA.

Unmarked, armed helicopters transported Laotian soldiers and U.S. personnel on missions. Short takeoff and landing (STOL) aircraft based at Pha Thi were used to link scores of other "friendly" positions deep in the Communist hinterland.

The American use of Laos to support the bombing of North Vietnam quickly became intolerable to Hanoi. Several attacks at Pha Thi failed in 1965 and 1967.

The place was impregnable," one American said. "To get up three sides you would have needed to be hand-to-hand combat, and under the heavy American air attack. Inside the limestone cave and concrete bunker, again according to American sources familiar with the incident, were between 12 and 21 American personnel, a number of Laotian officers and about 100 Meo troops. "They fought to the last man," said one American. "The incident has been common knowledge who was at Pha Thi at the time of the only confirmed North Vietnamese air attack in the history of the Laotian war, related: "It was just wacky. We saw these four incredibly slow-moving old planes coming out of North Vietnam. It was like something out of World War I. on Laos, Mr. Nixon said, "The Viets were trying to shoot machine guns out of windows. The An-2 has no bomb bay and they were going to push explosives out of the open door. cover scores of Americans. "Everybody saw them performing military and coming so the Air America military-support functions helicopters took off at once, and being much faster, ran rings around the Vietnamese planes. Lao attacks. The Air American guys fired M-16s at the planes right on the border. One of the planes crashed inside Laos. "The other went down about two kilometers inside North Vietnam. The other two got away. It was like a joke." Two months later, however, in March 1968, Phou Pha Thi was taken by Communist troops, after several unsuccessful attacks in February. Several outpost positions fell earlier in March, and some U.S. personnel were evacuated.

Landing Strip Lost

On March 10, 1968, the landing strip was lost, cutting Pha Thi's only link with the outside world. North Vietnamese troops then fought their

EDITORIALS

More on Laos

Since we wrote about it last week ("Once Again Laos"), the news from that unhappy country has grown even worse. Actually, Laos is not a country; it is a geographical area demarcated by the French for their own political purposes, and now invaded by the North Vietnamese and the Americans for their political purposes. The victims are the people of the various tribes that inhabit the region, and whose young men are drafted and killed in a war that has not the slightest concern for them; or who serve as mercenaries for the CIA-led American campaigns.

The American side operates through a local war lord, Gen. Vang Pao. Under American direction, he leads an army of Meo tribesmen who engage the Pathet Lao of Prince Souphanouvong, the half-brother of the "neutralist" Souvanna Phouma. Souphanouvong is on the North Vietnamese side; Souvanna Phouma is on our side. How these belligerents conduct themselves is told graphically by Jack Foisie in *The Washington Post* (March 2). In the recent engagements on the Plain of Jars, U.S. aircraft evacuated some 13,000 refugees to the Vientiane area. Some of these, Foisie says, went willingly out of the combat zone, but many, of the merchant class, in particular, would have preferred to stay. It was not that they liked the Communists, but the Pathet Lao would merely tax them—heavily to be sure—and they could remain in business. On that account, the Royalist troops moved them out forcibly, in accordance with a scorched-earth policy decreed by Vang Pao.

The forced evacuation included 680 Chinese, sixty Vietnamese who were long-time residents of Laos, sixty Thais, eighty-five Cambodians, and seven Indians. They were roughly handled, ordered to leave within an hour; their houses were looted and burned, all livestock was shot, and women were "molested." The refugees had to walk 20 miles to an airstrip, where the planes picked some up, while others were drafted into Vang Pao's army.

The refugees are the local victims, together with some American combat personnel and, of course, the American public which pays the taxes to support this crusade for freedom. A summary issued on March 1 by the U.S. command in Saigon indicates that in 1969, 300 American planes and 100 airmen were lost in Laos.

It is still only a "little war" but it is having a devastating effect on the lives of the people of the area (see "The Refugees of Laos" by David Kales, *The Nation*, January 26) who try to eke out a living as first one side and then the other drives them from their homes in a war that makes no sense to them or to anyone else. At latest reports the Administration was said to be prepared to approve

release of the full transcript of the hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Laos. It should have been released at the outset, and the longer it is delayed, the more time the Administration has to increase the level of our involvement.

NEWSWEEK
(Atlantic)
16 Mar 1970

STATINTL



BY WILLIAM P. BUNDY

MAKING SENSE ABOUT LAOS

Not a word about Laos appeared in President Nixon's state of the world message two weeks ago. Yet it may be just there that the "Nixon doctrine" is at this moment being probed and the President's steadiness under pressure put to the test.

Laos appears and disappears in the world's headlines with lightning speed. This time as before, it may vanish once again—or it may grow into a real crisis. The search for meaning starts with a look at what is new in the present situation compared to past years.

The fact that North Vietnamese forces have recaptured the Plain of Jars, including Muong Soui, is not in itself new or cause for alarm. Last summer, the North Vietnamese appeared to be pressing even farther to the west, but when a government counteroffensive moved into the plain, the government forces found an unexpected vacuum and wound up capturing considerable arms caches and holding the area for the first time in at least six years.

The inevitable riposte has now come and apparently been met more or less as planned. A reasonably successful retreat has been conducted by the government forces, composed in this area principally of Meo tribesmen led by Gen. Vang Pao. These forces have always been designed to defend their own hill areas, and have been supplied over the years by a justifiable U.S. effort from which the original veil of secrecy has long been removed in practice.

DANGEROUS GAME

Yet there are new and disturbing elements. The first and foremost is the scale of the North Vietnamese effort, well beyond the need in the plain alone. (The local Pathet Lao have long since dwindled to military insignificance.) This caused Mr. Nixon to authorize what was apparently a one-shot use of B-52 bombers for psychological effect. The action, predictably disclosed and exaggerated, has now aroused to fever pitch a third factor evident since last fall—the deep Congressional concern to avoid "new" entanglements in Asia and particularly any commitment of U.S. ground forces without express Congressional approval. Already, the outcry from this quarter must have gone far to cancel out the intended deterrent effect in Hanoi of the B-52 use.

A fourth, though not novel, element is Hanoi's intensified dry season infiltration into South Vietnam through eastern and southern Laos. If this pattern continues, Hanoi may be set-

ting greater store than before on finding some way to cut down the weight of the apparently effective U.S. air attacks in this part of Laos. Geographically, what goes on in central Laos has no bearing on the infiltration routes. Politically, military pressure in the center could be aimed to get Laotian Premier Souvanna Phouma to change the ground rules in the trail areas. And that would be a heavy new link in the chains that already bind Laos to Vietnam.

If this should be Hanoi's game, it would be a tricky and dangerous one. A continued military offensive aimed at changing Souvanna's attitudes would surely have the practical effect of destroying the main Meo force or moving the North Vietnamese close to Luang Prabang or Vientiane. In the face of such a drastic weakening of his position, it is not clear that the doughty Souvanna, the personal key to the survival of an independent Laos, could survive.

TIME FOR CANDOR

In essence, further pressing by Hanoi could go far to establish total North Vietnamese control of Laos, and the interim lines of division in the country, and foreclose full restoration of the 1962 accords as part of any peaceful settlement in the Indochina area.

That would be a tragic ending for Laos itself. The effect on Thailand would be serious, for if Laos is the side door to South Vietnam, it is the front door to Thailand. Most fundamentally, a neutralized Laos has always been, if not a possible model for an eventual Vietnamese settlement, at least a central building block in an agreed neutral status for all of former Indochina. Laos is not just a suburb of the Vietnam war, but a key area in its own right.

There is every indication that Mr. Nixon sees it in this way. Despite what may have been slight overreactions last summer and last month, he has worked manfully—like both his predecessors—to keep the essence of the 1962 accords alive and to stress that the U.S. has no objective in Laos but to see those accords reaffirmed and fully observed on both sides. What Governor Harriman negotiated in 1962 is still the right long-term vision for Laos, however vitiated it has been in the short term by actions for which any reasonable observer would hold Hanoi principally responsible.

If the Soviet Union truly wants a Southeast Asia that is stable and not dominated by anyone, it, too, should regard an independent Laos in this long-term light. Moscow can hardly be ignorant that the Chinese, despite all their other preoccupations, would hold a heavy hand over northern Laos and would thus hold a

strong position in the country should the royal government collapse.

In denouncing U.S. air efforts, Moscow has at least shown awareness of the situation, and it may be significant that the Indians—always sensitive to Soviet views—are reportedly talking of acting in some fashion. Both Russia and India could, if they wished, help to damp down the situation and get it stabilized.

It is against this background that Mr. Nixon on March 6 announced that he was appealing to Soviet Premier Kosygin and British Prime Minister Wilson to act. This appeal is right in line with Souvanna's earlier statements about consultations or even a reconvening of the Geneva Conference. Somehow, it must now be acted on.

In addition, Mr. Nixon has now made a candid public statement covering all the essential facts in the situation. Since the original draft of this column urged just this course, I applaud it heartily. Congress does in fact know what has been done, and has all along in essence. There have been good reasons for official silence in the past, with reporters unable to get behind Hanoi's lines in Laos and Washington legitimately concerned about putting the Soviets on the spot. But the present situation demanded a straightforward airing of actions that have been overwhelmingly justified and that must in any event come to the surface in any international discussion.

REASON TO PONDER

Above all, Mr. Nixon's frankness is aimed to steady American opinion. Hanoi has struck at this target before, as at Tet two years ago, and continued division in the United States could be an added temptation in itself. The time had come to remove the bugaboos of official secrecy and "American escalation," and this has now been done.

One cannot say how the American people will react to a dose of candor. Alongside the patent desire to turn away from foreign problems, there must be set a strain of stubbornness, of resistance to being pushed around, and of reluctance to abandon a deserving and peaceful people we have helped to put in an exposed position. Hanoi can probably get away with an outright grab in Laos if it really wants to. But in the process it could pay a heavy price in terms of increased public support in the U.S. for sticking it out in Vietnam and for standing firm in Paris and in Southeast Asia generally. These are the factors before it makes any further moves.

16 MAR 1970

Laos: Another Vietnam?

There was a time when Laos—the Land of the Million Elephants and the White Parasol—was a subject of considerable mirth in Washington. Beside the slaughterhouse realities of Vietnam, events in the remote Buddhist kingdom seemed almost like an opium dream in which little men with unpronounceable names chased each other back and forth across the Plain of Jars with monotonous regularity. But last week, Laos was once again in the forefront of the news, and this time neither the Administration nor its critics was finding it a laughing matter.

One reason for the seriousness in Washington was the stunning success of the current dry-season offensive by the North Vietnamese and their local Communist allies, the Pathet Lao. But even more unsettling to the White House was the captious mood on Capitol Hill, where many congressmen, not all of them doves on Vietnam, were making plain their unhappiness with the sub-rosa nature of the U.S. role in Laos. A sizable number even shared the fear of South Dakota's Sen. George McGovern that "in spite of the painful lessons of Vietnam, we are going down the same road in Laos, and we are doing it in secret."

Role: Trying to contain the rising tide of Congressional criticism, President Nixon last week issued a carefully phrased, 3,000-word statement from his Florida White House at Key Biscayne. The U.S. commitment in Laos, the President said, "is limited. It is requested. It is supportive and it is defensive." Mr. Nixon then, for the first time, admitted the U.S. had taken on something of a combat role in Laos. "In addition to air operations on the

Ho Chi Minh Trail," he said, "we have continued to carry out reconnaissance flights in north Laos and fly combat support missions for Laotian forces when requested to do so by the Royal Laotian Government."

While admitting the U.S. air role, however, the President denied that there are any "American ground combat troops" in Laos or that his Administration had any plans for introducing such troops. He contended that there are only 1,040 Americans in Laos either "directly employed" or "on contract" to the U.S. Government, and that of this number 643 are engaged as military advisers or in logistics. "U.S. personnel in Laos during the past year has not increased," Mr. Nixon stated, while the North Vietnamese "have poured over 13,000 additional troops into Laos during the past few months, raising their total in Laos to over 67,000." In view of the massive North Vietnamese buildup and their recent offensive, Mr. Nixon disclosed that he had written to Prime Minister Harold Wilson and Premier Aleksei Kosygin, urging them to help restore the 1962 Geneva accord. (Britain and the Soviet Union were co-chairmen of the Geneva conference that established the neutrality of Laos and set up a government in Vientiane theoretically composed of rightists, neutralists and Communists.)

Buffer: Whether that help would come was subject to considerable doubt. The British appeared willing to have consultations among the fourteen signatories of the 1962 convention. But the Russian attitude was another matter. Most observers are convinced that Moscow, already concerned over an ambitious Red Chinese road-building program in Laos, would like to preserve the precariously balanced buffer state much as it exists today—mainly to block any further encroachments by Peking into Southeast Asia. But now that the U.S. has publicly admitted its military role in Laos, it might be difficult for Moscow to avoid denouncing the U.S. as a violator of the Geneva pact. Hanoi, of course, has never admitted that it has troops in Laos.

Domestically, it was not at all certain that Mr. Nixon had managed—as he has done in the case of Vietnam—to throw his domestic critics off stride. For despite his assurances that he was leveling with the American people on Laos, it was readily apparent that the President had tiptoed through some delicate semantic tulips. There may not be, as he stated, any uniformed U.S. "ground combat" troops in Laos. But correspondents on the scene in Laos have reported that a sizable number of American "civilians"—many of them former GI's—are not only



Conrad © 1970 Los Angeles Times
 "Everybody lower your voices
 ... Nobody knows we're here!"

STATINTL

training and advising but occasionally leading Laotian troops into combat—and have sustained casualties. These soldiers in multi are part of a Central Intelligence Agency operation to sustain the "clandestine army" of the mercurial Meo general, Vang Pao. And in the air, the "reconnaissance" and "combat support" missions mentioned by Mr. Nixon add up to some 15,000 sorties a month. According to some accounts, the air war against the Communists in Laos is now running at a higher tempo than the bombing of North Vietnam before the cessation (page 38).

Rockets: Despite this covert U.S. buildup, the North Vietnamese swept Vang Pao's forces off the Plain of Jars and took a number of outposts farther west and south. Some reports last week place Pathet Lao patrols 6 miles from the airport at Vientiane—and in possession of 122-mm. rockets with a 7-mile range. Others said that North Vietnamese troops were bearing down on the key junction of highways 7 and 13 between Vientiane and the royal capital of Luang Prabang. Clearly, the military initiative lay with the Communists, and the question was: how far did they intend to go?

Optimists were convinced that the Communists, having retaken the Plain of Jars, would go no farther. "I don't see what all the fuss is about," said a French diplomat in Vientiane. "They will go no farther. It happens every year." But not everyone was so sure. This year, North Vietnamese units bristle with Soviet rockets and tanks, and last week—despite a lull in the fighting—a steady stream of trucks bearing men and armaments plied the road from North Vietnam to the forward positions in Laos. With three months of dry season still remaining, it was even possible that the North Vietnamese might drive to the Mekong River, attack Vientiane and overthrow the government of Premier Souvanna Phouma.

It is considered more likely, however, that the North Vietnamese will take a middle course. This might entail an assault on Vang Pao's base camp at Long Cheng and an attempt to destroy his Meo army as a military force. At the same time, according to this scenario, the Communists might push to the cease-fire line of 1962. From such a position of military strength, it is conjectured, they might then demand a restructuring of the Laotian Government. With their own four Cabinet seats and the eight allotted to the neutralists, they would effectively control the government and would probably push Souvanna into one of the Cabinet posts now reserved for a rightist. If all went according to plan, then the Communist-controlled government could order the U.S. out of Laos.

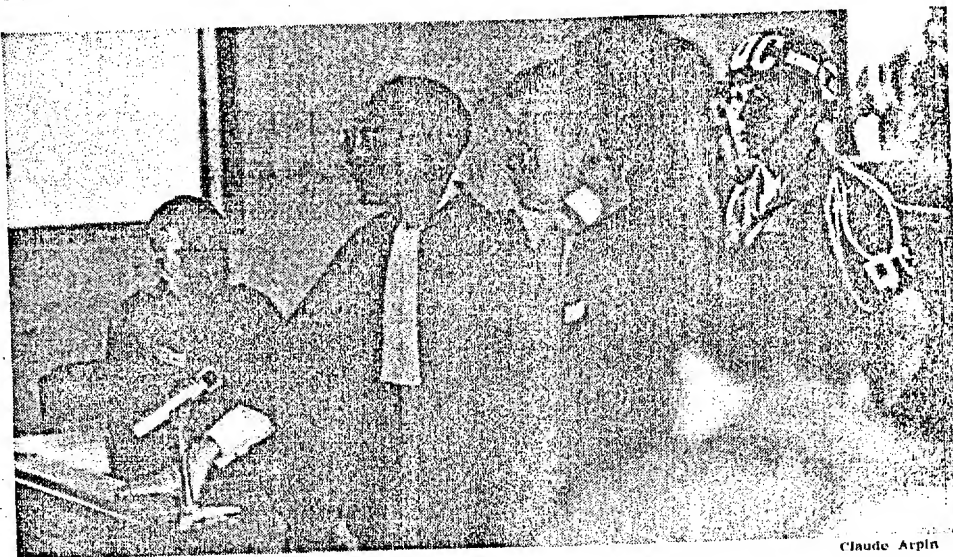
Gain: The next weeks should reveal what course the North Vietnamese intend to take. But the nature of Mr. Nixon's dilemma is all too clear. Should the Communists push ahead and try to seize the government or revamp it into a more

would feel directly threatened—and might invoke the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization and call for U.S. combat assistance. Moreover, a Communist gain in Laos would take much of the luster off the promise of Vietnamization, for the lesson would be plain: the U.S. might be able to extricate itself from Southeast Asia, but the vacuum would surely be filled by the Communists.

Such is the nature of the stakes in Laos. And the embarrassing reality is that Mr. Nixon has pathetically few chips to play. Even with American air support, the Laotian Government cannot withstand a determined push by the North Vietnamese. And against the option of dispatching U.S. ground troops falls all the weight of the lessons of Vietnam, public and Congressional opinion—and Mr. Nixon's own repeated assurances.

the court. We do not need foreigners here," snapped Lt. Col. Trien Khac Huynh, the tribunal's chairman. "This is a Vietnamese court." Then, while an American diplomat sat uncomfortably on a bench, transcribing the trial with a tape recorder, the court attacked Chau for his dealings with the U.S. "Do you admit to your contacts with the CIA?" demanded the prosecutor, as if consorting with South Vietnam's chief ally were a crime. "If I was in liaison with American officials," Chau said, "it was because I was trying to save my country." Minutes later, Chau was marched off by grim-faced Vietnamese military policemen to begin a ten-year term at hard labor.

Warning: Because there is no appeal from the court, Chau's case should have ended there. But there were few people who believed it would. Chau's plight,



Tran Ngoc Chau in court: Did U.S. silence make the verdict inevitable?

Making a Point

South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu may be a masterful politician, but there are times when he wields power like a blunt instrument. A case in point was the way he went about jailing his onetime friend Tran Ngoc Chau, who had dared to challenge Thieu in the National Assembly. When Chau was led into a stuffy Saigon courtroom last week to be retried for the crime of meeting with a Communist spy (who also happens to be his brother), he was already dressed in the black cotton garb of a convicted felon and there were patches of tape on his swollen neck to cover traces of an alleged police beating. And the five officers sitting on the court were the same ones who had earlier found Chau guilty without even bothering to hear lawyers for the defense or any witnesses.

Evidence was soon forthcoming that the tribunal was in no mood to change its mind. An attempt to call U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker and other senior American officials who might have testified that they had encouraged Chau to

they predicted, will exert a commanding influence upon the politics of Vietnam for months to come. Above all, they said, the trial will intimidate those in Saigon who hope, like Chau, to negotiate an end to the war. At the same time, Thieu used official American silence over Chau as a warning to potential rivals that U.S. friends in high places are no guarantee of their safety. Indeed, one Thieu aide asserted last week that because the Americans refused to speak up for Chau, the treason trial had been inevitable. Ambassador Bunker could offer no more than private expressions of the United States' pain and embarrassment.

And that is precisely why Thieu acted as he did. "Thieu thinks he is going to win through President Nixon's Vietnamization plan," said one of Thieu's supporters last week. "He thinks that's what Mr. Nixon wants, too. But he can never be quite sure—there are still some people in Washington who think they can engineer a settlement in Paris. Thieu doesn't want anybody around in Saigon who might help the Americans do this . . . I think he made his point with the Chau case."

U.S. POLICY'S RISKY 'DEAD END'

By Maynard Parker
Saigon Bureau Chief

In the autumn of 1964—nearly a year before the U.S. began its bombing campaign over North Vietnam—I arrived at Korat Air Base in northeast Thailand, a second lieutenant fresh from training in the United States. Stepping from the plane, I was surprised to see two squadrons of F-105 Thunderchief fighter-bombers preparing for take-off, their wings laden with 500-pound bombs. When I asked an American what the F-105s were doing there in Thailand, he replied: "Bombing Laos."

Since then, I have watched the U.S. escalate again and again in Laos, always in secret and without the knowledge or consent of the American public. Once confined to the Ho Chi Minh Trail, our bombers now range across the entire country. We supply helicopters to carry American-paid Laotian troops into battle. We have forced the evacuation of thousands of Laotians to create free-fire zones. And now we have used giant B-52 bombers in northern Laos at least once. Indeed, it seems clear that Washington has purposely escalated in Laos in an attempt to pressure the leaders in Hanoi into a Vietnam compromise.

The wisdom of such a policy seems to me exceedingly questionable. To begin with, until the U.S. upset the delicate balance of forces in Laos, the conflict was a limited war fought for limited objectives under a tacit set of rules. The North Vietnamese and their Pathet Lao allies never carried their offensive to the

Mekong River Valley—strategic terrain for the United States—while the forces of the Laotian Government never ventured too deep into Pathet Lao territory on the border of North Vietnam or near the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Within the last twelve months, however, the U.S. has managed to escalate the air war in Laos to the same intensity it once had over North Vietnam—a policy which hardly makes sense when the Nixon Administration is trying to disengage from a direct combat role in Southeast Asia. Today, American planes based in Thailand, South Vietnam and on carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin fly more than 500 sorties a day. The Plain of Jars area has been evacuated and turned into a free-fire zone. And last summer, Gen. Vang Pao and his CIA-financed Meo guerrillas were allowed to launch the biggest offensive operation in the history of northern Laos that temporarily gained the government control of the Plain of Jars.

It seems to me that such an aggressive strategy carries immense dangers for the U.S. Ever since President Kennedy declared

"worthy of engaging the attention of great powers," the U.S. aim in Laos has been not to create an anti-Communist client state along the line of South Korea but to foster a neutral buffer between Communist North Vietnam and pro-Western Thailand. To accomplish this, U.S. diplomats have repeatedly stated that their goal is to keep the Mekong Valley (including Vientiane) and the royal capital of Luang Prabang out of Communist hands.

Credentials: Obviously, if this is the case, the U.S. has no strategic interests in northern Laos, including the Plain of Jars. Similarly, although the government of Prince Souvanna Phouma would like to hold the Plain of Jars to enhance its neutralist credentials, most Laotians are not all that concerned about what happens in northern and eastern Laos because the inhabitants are not ethnic Lao but hill tribesmen and thus of little concern to the ruling families of Laos.

By contrast, these same areas are of great strategic importance to the North Vietnamese. Large portions of northern and eastern Laos are only a short march from Hanoi and for centuries had to pay tribute to the old Annamese empires. This in no way excuses or justifies the presence of the North Vietnamese troops now in Laos; their presence is clearly illegal under the Geneva accords. But the unhappy fact is that they are already in northern Laos, and because they view garrisoning of the areas as absolutely essential to their national security, no one expects them to depart even if the Vietnam war should end. What is more important, the North Vietnamese are in a better position than the Americans to defend their interests where it counts—on the ground.

For all its horror, bombing is no more efficient in Laos than it was in North Vietnam. It took months for the Johnson Administration to learn the lesson that strategic bombing of an agrarian people who carry most of their goods on their backs or on bicycles is only marginally effective. Apparently, the Nixon Administration has not learned the same lesson. In the end, air power neither won nor lost the Plain of Jars and air power alone will not keep the North Vietnamese out of Vientiane. Only ground troops can do that. The essential problem is that the Laotian forces come off a bad second to the North Vietnamese, and despite the cries of some U.S. senators that the U.S. is becoming involved in another Vietnam, intervention in Laos by U.S. ground troops is simply out of the question.

Sterile: Thus, at a critical juncture in the U.S. disengagement from Asia, the Administration's policy in Laos has reached a dangerous dead end. By engaging in a bout of escalation with the North Vietnamese, Washington has pursued a sterile policy down a path with no graceful exit and certainly leading to no time has come for the U.S. to begin a sen-

sible de-escalation of the war in Laos with the goal of restoring the stalemate that once existed between the two sides. Such a policy would mean that the United States would unilaterally halt its daily bombing sorties over northern Laos and rein in Vang Pao's Meo army by holding it to its present position south of the Plain of Jars. Only along the Ho Chi Minh Trail should the United States continue its present raids.

There seems every reason to believe that the North Vietnamese might be induced either to halt their offensive in place or at most to advance no farther than the 1962 Geneva conference ceasefire line—as long as they feel that their own security is not being threatened. This is not to say that the North Vietnamese would not prefer in the long run to have a Hanoi-influenced neutralist regime in Laos. But with a long war ahead

of them in South Vietnam and with a host of economic problems at home, the North Vietnamese must see no real advantage in moving to the banks of the Mekong River, where they could well find themselves in a long, bruising war with the Thais.

The risks for the U.S. in such a de-escalatory policy are minimal, particularly since most of the remaining towns and road junctions which might be lost are of no strategic value to the U.S. Since the U.S. has no regular combat troops in Laos, there obviously would be no danger to U.S. personnel on the ground. One of the few advantages of air power is that it can be turned on and off instantly. If the North Vietnamese should defy all diplomatic predictions and march on Vientiane, air strikes could be resumed and with far more justification than at present.

Groundwork: More important, if an equilibrium of forces could be re-established, the groundwork would be laid for a longer-lasting settlement once the Vietnam war is over. For, once the U.S. and the North Vietnamese stop battling each other in Laos, the prospects for a durable peace are far better than in Vietnam. Both sides in the Laotian civil war pay allegiance to King Savang Vatthana. Both respect the 1962 Geneva accords in word if not in deed. Despite their denunciation of him, the Pathet Lao still recognized Souvanna as the head of the Laotian Government. Unlike Vietnam there is already a coalition government with four Cabinet posts still held open by Souvanna for the Communists—and with more probably available through negotiations. Most important, the lackadaisical Lao—unlike the emotional, warlike Vietnamese—give every indication of being able to work out a peace settlement among themselves once they are left alone and no longer goaded into battle by their supporters. There is probably no other place in the world where the general staff on both sides would sooner

16 MAR 1970

Washington Offbeat

CIA Chief, Red 'Spook' Share a Roof

By VERA GLASER
and MALVINA STEPHENSON
Inquirer Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON, Mar. 15.

WHO is spying on whom? The private lives of Richard Helms, director of the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency, and Soviet Agent Boris Strelnikov, it has been learned, are spent in close proximity.

The two cloak-and-dagger foes bed down under the same roof.

They share the same plumbing and are linked to the same switchboard at the "Irene," a 525-unit apartment beehive at 4701 Willard ave. in suburban Chevy Chase, Md.

Suave, patent-leather-haired Helms, sometimes referred to as the nation's "No. 1 spook," and his British-born wife occupy No. 610, a two-bedroom unit. It has been fortified with two extra locks.

Strelnikov, his wife and two children live in an identical unit four floors up, No. 1018.

The burly, graying Russian is listed as a correspondent for the Soviet Government newspaper Pravda, but "every so-called Soviet newsman has a secondary intelligence function," an experienced U. S. operative said. "At the very least, their material goes to KGB headquarters in Moscow."

THE cold-war enemies are cozy as two bugs in a rug. Whether they are "bugging" each other is anybody's guess. A burglar alarm with flashing red light protects the front door of every apartment in the building. It may have been what attracted Helms and Strelnikov.

Strelnikov moved in two years ago. Helms leased his digs nine

second wife, the former Cynthia



MR. HELMS

McKelvie. Both pay about \$450 monthly rent. Both couples shun interviews, but these reporters barged in unannounced on the spouses of the "spies."

The two women reacted differently when their cover was blown. Each may have reflected her husband's style as a "spook."

Mrs. Helms was as cool as 007 himself when cornered. "Sit down and have some coffee," the attractive, blue-eyed redhead said in her office at the Smithsonian Institution, where she works part-time on educational radio broadcasts.

Mrs. Strelnikov, her round face pale, peered apprehensively from her apartment. Before she answered the repeated rings, the callers were inspected through a peephole and the burglar light flashed red.

"I'm sorry, I don't know," she kept saying.

BOTH women said they were unaware of the other's presence in the building. "That's the business of the security men," Mrs. Helms remarked.

Queried about Strelnikov, a CIA official said, "Yes, we know he's there."

Has the Helms apartment been "swept" for electronic eavesdropping devices? The source clammed up.

Helms, who has survived several embarrassing flaps since becoming CIA director in 1966, is on the hot spot again.

The role of his agency in Laos is under scrutiny. CIA agents there reportedly are posing as civilian AID officials while recruiting and training guerrillas.

Strelnikov has specialized in covering racial situations, campus disorders, Vietnam policy and the Pueblo incident, all embarrassing matters for the U. S. He sets up appointments and escorts visiting Soviet officials.

What is it like to be married to one of Washington's most spectacular figures?

Mrs. Helms revealed in the impromptu interview that she and her husband have learned to "go right back to sleep" after top secret telephone calls awaken them in the wee hours.

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U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

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WHAT REDS ARE UP TO IN LAOS

North Vietnam's rulers are calling the shots in beleaguered Laos—and a cable from the scene makes clear that little except U. S. stands in their way.

VIENTIANE

Cut through the smoke of battle here in Laos—as well as the war of words in Washington—and this key fact emerges:

North Vietnam is getting into position to take over Laos, a country that is vital to Hanoi's plans to conquer all of what was once called Indo-China—meaning South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia as well.

What is going on now is an extension of a Communist military campaign that started shortly after the end of World War II.

The unanswered question is whether Hanoi has finally decided to go all the way at this time to bring Laos under its full sway.

Decision for U. S. The Laotians cannot hold back the superior North Vietnamese forces by themselves. Laos will inevitably fall to the Communists, Asian authorities here insist, unless the U. S. decides to move in to prevent it.

There are really two wars in Laos. One is in the eastern section along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the network of paths and roads running through Laos from North to South Vietnam. For years, the Communists have funneled troops and

tiny Regular Army of about 50,000, plus another 6,000 to 10,000 tribal guerrillas.

In the southeast, the Laotian Army must protect a string of important towns along the Mekong River from 25,000 North Vietnamese in the Ho Chi Minh corridor. In the North, they face thrusts by more than 40,000 Hanoi troops who threaten the two Laotian capitals of Vientiane and Luang Prabang.

Hanoi's hesitation. For a decade, fighting has seesawed across Northern Laos and over the Plain of Jars, named after ancient burial urns found on the plateau. Neither side has won a decisive victory. The Royal Laotian Army lacks the means to win. The North Vietnamese can win—any time they wish—but have never gone all out.

Why has Hanoi never ordered a complete sweep of Laos?

In the past, two major reasons are considered to be behind Hanoi's reluctance to destroy the Royal forces.

- President John F. Kennedy's warning in 1961 that the U. S. would intervene with ground troops if the North Vietnamese took over the Mekong River towns.

- The 1962 Geneva agreements on Laos which gave the Communists all they wanted—at least at that time: access to South Vietnam through the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Standing alone, Laos is of little importance to the rest of the world and an unlikely candidate to become a major trouble spot. Smaller than the State

of Oregon, Laos has an estimated population of less than 3 million. It has no industry and few natural resources to tempt an outside power.

Laos's sole importance lies in its strategic geography—bordering on North and South Vietnam, Red China, Cambodia, Thailand and Burma. Laos is the heart of Southeast Asia, and its effectiveness as a buffer state is of concern to all free Asians, particularly those nations threatened with Communist subversion.

Thailand has a long, virtually indefensible border with Laos. Subversion and infiltration by North Vietnamese and Red Chinese insurgents through Laos into Thailand already is one of Bangkok's principal problems.

Even Cambodia, which has tried to walk a neutralist line in the Vietnam war, is worried over the Laotian border. The Red Khmer guerrilla movement in Cambodia is of concern to that nation's ruler, Prince Sihanouk.

American stake. Also involved is the future of American standing in Asia. Washington repeatedly has voiced its concern for Laos's independence. If Laos were to fall to North Vietnam aggression, credibility of the U. S. commitment to Thailand and other countries in Asia would be suspect.

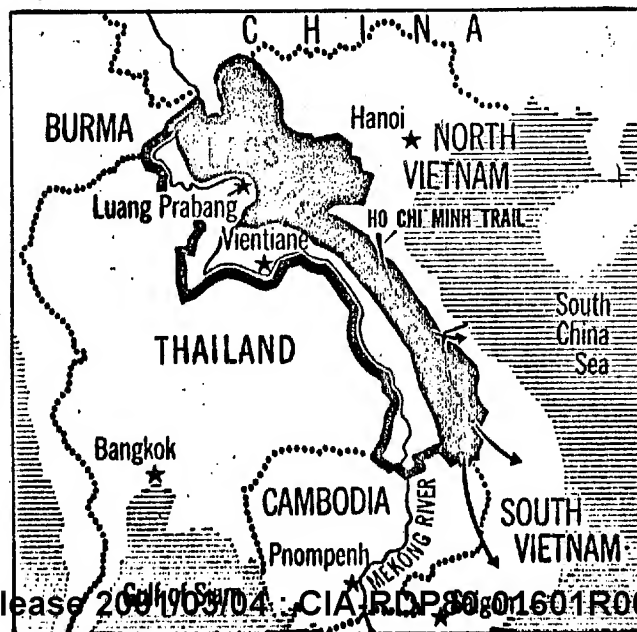
Experts here say there are several courses of action open to the North Vietnamese:

- Hanoi simply could hold on to areas under Communist control in North-

(continued on next page)

In the jungle highlands of Laos there is another conflict, almost completely separate from the first. It began after World War II as a fight between Laotian leaders and the French. Then it developed into a civil war pitting two half brothers against each other—the royal Government of Premier Souvanna Phouma and the Communist Pathet Lao forces of the so-called Red Prince, Souphanouvong.

As the war dragged on, the local Laotian Communist forces became demoralized and depleted. So Hanoi moved in. Today's fighting is almost entirely between Communist North Vietnamese invaders and the royal forces to number 67,000, and Laos is



—Wide World Photo

Premier Souvanna Phouma. The Laotian leader faces growing danger from North Vietnamese Communists who already occupy much of his strategic Asian kingdom.

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

THE WAR IN LAOS

[continued from preceding page]

ern Laos, retain the Ho Chi Minh Trail—despite large-scale American bombing—and leave the “Laos question” for settlement later.

- The North Vietnamese could move to destroy Souvanna Phouma's Government, in effect daring the U. S. to intervene and risk another Vietnam war.

- A third Communist option would be to promise Souvanna Phouma a truce if he halted American bombing of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Some U. S. officials privately are worried over what the Premier's reaction would be if Hanoi actually offered such a deal.

All-out drive? Most observers in Vientiane—discussing Hanoi's alternatives—do not believe North Vietnam will launch an all-out attack at this time. Instead, they say, Hanoi is likely to press for a political settlement to replace the one of 1962 and give it an important voice in a new coalition government.

Some experts in Vientiane disagree. They argue that the North Vietnamese desperately need dramatic victories in Laos to compensate for their inability to launch a successful drive against U. S. forces in South Vietnam.

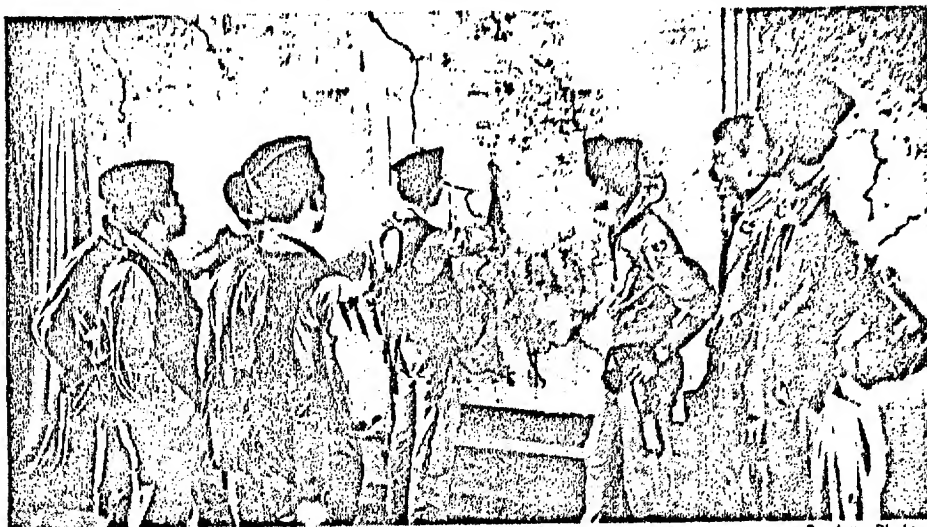
From the purely military point of view, nothing really stands in North Vietnam's way in Laos. Souvanna Phouma's little Army, mostly Meo and other tribal guerrillas, was pushed off the Plain of Jars in late February when the Communists moved in with tanks, artillery and the largest ground force in the history of the war. There are at least two North Vietnamese divisions in Northern Laos.

From the political point of view, Hanoi may be hesitant only because it is not certain what action the U. S. might take in response to a full-scale Communist thrust.

U. S. options, however, appear limited. At a time when the U. S. is withdrawing from South Vietnam, it is considered most unlikely American ground troops would be sent into yet another Southeast Asian country. Even Laotian officials are aware the U. S. Congress and public would oppose use of U. S. ground forces in Laos.

A “secret war”? American involvement in the Laotian war already is considerable—with more than 1,000 U. S. citizens helping Royal Army forces and guerrilla troops in the North.

Much of this aid is “aboveground,” directed from Vientiane where military attaches at the U. S. Embassy furnish Laotian armed forces with weapons and spare parts. This is all legal under the 1962 Geneva agreements which were



—Coudoux Photo

Laotian Air Force pilots are briefed prior to a mission against Communist invaders from Hanoi. Most Laotian pilots fly T-28s, U. S. trainers converted for use in battle.



—Pix Photo

Laotian soldiers, numbering 50,000, face superior Communist force armed with tanks and artillery. Laotian troops are largely trained, armed, supplied by the U. S.

supposed to guarantee the neutrality of Laos.

But away from Vientiane there is another side of U. S. assistance—the so-called secret war.

In the highlands of Northern Laos, agents from the Central Intelligence Agency direct Meo mountain tribesmen—armed and supplied by the U. S.—and former Green Beret troops, now dressed in civilian clothing, train and sometimes command guerrilla forces.

Full extent of U. S. air support in Laos also has never been disclosed fully. Best estimates here are that American warplanes—including B-52 bombers—are flying up to 400 sorties a day against Communist troops in the Plain of Jars and along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Despite this U. S. aid, the Laotians will have to make their own fight, in the end. Some military observers here believe that at the very least, the North

Vietnamese next will try to neutralize the Meo guerrillas who sit on their flank in Northern Laos.

The Meo chief, Gen. Vang Phao, has about 6,000 first-class troops and about 20,000 mountaineers.

Time factor. Experts predict a Communist siege of Vang Phao's headquarters within a month. The rainy season—which usually signals the end of heavy fighting—will not arrive for another three and a half months. This gives the Reds plenty of time to make any move they wish.

A Communist attack on the Meo, when and if it comes, could disclose Hanoi's ultimate intentions. But the entire crisis atmosphere could drag on for months. It depends upon Communist rulers in Hanoi. Almost all the cards are in their hands.



Stanley Karnow

Topsy-Turvy Asian Events Breeding Irrational Policies

STATINTL

HONG KONG—This is one of those periods in Southeast Asia when events are so tangled that, to cite the old adage, anybody who is not completely confused is just very badly informed.

The major powers as well as the states of the region themselves are apparently being swept along in a topsy-turvy momentum over which they seem to have little control. And, as a consequence, well-planned policies have degenerated into irrational, knee-jerk reactions that compound the confusion.

Nothing illustrates the contradictions of American conduct more dramatically than the spectacle of the United States desperately seeking to resurrect the coalition government in Laos while balking at the creation of a similar coalition in South Vietnam.

The argument against a coalition in Saigon is that it will open the way for a Communist takeover. The argument for bringing the Communists back into the Vientiane coalition is that it will restore peace and stability to Laos.

The official line, moreover, is that a coalition cannot be "imposed" on the South Vietnamese. In Laos, however, the United States forced the right wing to cooperate with the Communists when the original coalition was formed in 1962.

AN EQUALLY CURIOUS contrast between American and Laotian attitudes emerged on the same day last week in simultaneous but obviously uncoordinated statements by President Nixon and Premier Souvanna Phouma.

Mr. Nixon insisted in his statement that the U.S. bombings of the Ho Chi Minh trail are imperative "to save American and allied lives" in Vietnam. In his view, Souvanna Phouma said, the Communists could use the trail as much as they leave the rest of Laos alone.

The President also stressed that the bombings are being carried out at the request of the Laotian government. Asked whether the bombings would continue if Hanoi accepted his offer, Souvanna Phouma replied:

"It is up to the Americans to decide."

In the meantime, the Thais have been blurring the situation beyond comprehension by characteristically taking firm, unswerving stands on both sides of the question.

Speaking in New York a few weeks ago, for example, the Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman asserted that the nations of Southeast Asia could no longer rely on the United States for protection and suggested instead an accommodation with Communist China.

Thereupon, it was later disclosed, he proceeded to Washington to put in an "urgent" request for an increase in American military aid to Thailand because of the Communist offensive in adjoining Laos.

WEIRD INCONSISTENCIES also embroil South Vietnam, where President Thieu's regime alternatively praises U.S. support and displays blatant anti-Americanism, as it did at the trial of Tran Ngoc Chau, the Saigon politician accused of colluding with the Central Intelligence Agency.

Oddly enough, in a broadcast the other day from Hanoi, the Communists came to Chau's defense despite his admitted CIA connections. His conviction, said Hanoi, was "a fascist act of repression."

Americans baffled and dismayed by all this incoherence may find a measure of consolation in the fact that the Communists, whatever their tendency, are mixed-up as much as everyone else.

Judging from their conspicuous silence on the subject, for instance, the Chinese are clearly unhappy with the Laotian Communist's recent five-point proposal for a peace settlement in Laos.

Moscow, Peking, Hanoi and the Vietcong have undoubtedly been thrown into a tizzy as well by the sudden turnabout in Cambodia, which served as their key *pled-a-terre* in the Indochina peninsula.

In places like Indonesia and Burma, meanwhile, both the Russians and Chinese have nothing to show for their efforts to encourage native insurgents or to improve their relations with the local government.

This widespread disarray partly represents internal changes in the countries of the region as a younger generation, dissatisfied with the doctrines that stirred its fathers' thirsts for fresh approaches.

To a significant extent, the ferment reflects a quest for new alignments in response to such developments as the Sino-Soviet conflict and an eventual American withdrawal from the area.

Whatever unfolds in the future, then, the past turmoil and present instability of Southeast Asia are proof that it is a quagmire that is bound to swallow up the most brilliant of strategies.

China Opposes Peace in Laos

By Stanley Karnow
Washington Post Foreign Service

HONG KONG, March 15—Peking appears to be trying to obstruct Laotian Communist efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement in Laos at the present time.

Though anxious to avoid a major conflict on their southern border, the Chinese evidently consider continued tensions in Laos as advantageous to them in several ways:

- Prolonged instability in Laos could intensify the pressure on Thailand to edge away from the United States and seek an accommodation with China.

- Chinese theories of "Peoples War" are being tested there in opposition to the Soviet thesis of "peaceful coexistence."

- Chronic disorder in Laos could be an opportunity for China to build up its own influence in certain parts of the country adjacent to its frontiers as a form of self-protection.

- Laos, like Vietnam, may be seen as a quagmire that is bogging down the United States, draining its resources and, in the process, further exacerbating dissent in America.

One of Signatories

Chinese resistance to a negotiated settlement in Laos is significant, since Peking was one of the 14 signatories of the 1962 Geneva Agreement guaranteeing Laotian neutrality.

Thus they are likely to block any attempt—such as suggested by Laotian Premier Prince Souvanna Phouma last week—to reconvene the Geneva Conference.

Peking's hostility to a Laos settlement has been plainly reflected in both the omissions and assertions in four major Chinese pronouncements issued over the past two weeks.

On the one hand, these statements have conspicuously failed to mention the Laotian Communists' proposal to establish a "provisional coalition government" to restore peace to Laos.

News Analysis

At the same time, the Chinese have repeatedly urged the Communists to "persist in protracted war," claiming that this strategy "will certainly smash every scheme of U.S. imperialism and its lackeys."

Vietnam Link

Obviously aware that the Laotian Communists are directed by Hanoi, Peking has emphasized the link between Laos and the Vietnam conflict. As a Peoples Daily editorial said on March 6:

"The Nixon Administration has intensified the war of aggression against Laos as an important measure to coordinate with the so-called 'Vietnamization' of its war of aggression in Vietnam."

The Chinese are pushing ahead with their road-building in Laos. They built two routes from Yunnan into northern Laos and are now surveying one southward towards Pak Beng near the Thai border.

In addition to exerting pressure on the Thais, the southern road may be a Chinese effort to carve out a zone of influence in the areas where Thailand, Burma and Laos meet.

Protege of U.S.

The roads are being constructed under an ambiguous 1962 agreement signed in Peking by General Phoumi Nosavan, then Laotian Defense Minister. Ironically Phoumi had been the leading Laotian protege of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Because of that agreement, Premier Souvanna Phouma has carefully refrained from requesting U.S. bombings of the Chinese construction corps—about 10,000 coolies defended by battalions.

In contrast to their unbending stand at the moment, the Chinese played a key role at the 1962 Geneva Conference in promoting a neutral coalition under Souvanna Phouma.

Indeed, as many at the Geneva Conference pointed out, the Peking delegation led by Foreign Minister Chen Yi was far more insistent than the Russians in their support for Souvanna

Phouma as the only acceptable premier.

In retrospect, the Chinese seem to have been motivated by the belief that Laotian neutrality would lead to one of their major objectives—the withdrawal of American forces from the periphery of China.

Chinese Intervention

Prior to the Geneva Conference, Peking was particularly alarmed by interventions in Laos by Chinese Nationalist troops flown from Taiwan into bases in northern Thailand. An estimated 4,000 Chinese Nationalists were reportedly operating in western Laos in 1961 despite attempts by the Kennedy Administration to keep them out.

In the opinion of some analysts, both Peking and Hanoi were persuaded that the Laotian coalition would serve as a model for a similar arrangement in Saigon.

But in early 1963, when it became clear that the

United States had no intention of accepting such a compromise in South Vietnam, the Chinese and North Vietnamese stiffened their line in Laos.

The Chinese position toughened even more after the Soviet Union increased its support for North Vietnam in 1965. The Cultural Revolution inside China later hardened Peking's policy further.

Communist activities in Laos are essentially directed by Hanoi. Therefore, most specialists submit, the Chinese would probably accede to North Vietnamese wishes if Hanoi actually entered into negotiations on Laos—just as Peking finally diluted its opposition to the Vietnam talks in Paris.

For the moment, however, Chinese rigidity serves the North Vietnamese as an alternative alignment in the event that peace proposals on Hanoi's terms are rejected.

STATINTL

STATINTL

12 Americans Died in Loss Of Secret Laotian Outpost

By T. D. Allman

Special to The Washington Post

VIENTIANE, March 15—

More than a dozen Americans were killed in Laos two years ago when Communist troops overran a secret American installation that assisted U.S. bombing of North Vietnam. The incident has been kept a secret.

In his March 6 statement on Laos, President Nixon said, "No American stationed in Laos has ever been killed in ground combat operations."

The sentence, although carefully phrased to exclude casualties in the American air war in Laos and U.S. military personnel who have fought in Laos from U.S. bases in South Vietnam and Thailand, failed to cover scores of Americans performing military and military-supported functions on the ground in Laos who have been killed in combat with North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao troops.

[Speaking with newsmen Friday, White House spokesman Ronald L. Ziegler said there were "some" U.S. casualties in Laos besides the announced death of Army Capt. Joseph K. Bush Jr. Without saying how many, Ziegler said, "some of the casualties would be U.S. civilians, some would be U.S. military."]

The most costly of these engagements, according to long-time Laos residents, occurred just two years ago, when more than a dozen Americans were killed defending an American radar, reconnaissance and rescue base in extreme north-eastern Laos that guided U.S. aircraft to their targets and electronically released their bomb loads by radio.

The installation was called Phou Pha Thi.

Phou Pha Thi is a 5,860-foot-high mountain, 100 miles northeast of Vientiane and about 160 miles west of Hanoi, in Laos's Communist-dominated Sam Neua Province ("Phou" is the Laotian word for mountain).

Phou Pha Thi, one of the highest and most isolated mountains in the hilly north-east, lies within 15 miles of the North Vietnamese frontier in a province that was granted to the Pathet Lao in 1954 as a regroupment area.

Phou Pha Thi, like most of the mountains of north-east Laos, is largely limestone. It rises up sheer on three sides. The fourth side also steep but negotiable, rises more than 1,600 feet from a valley.

The mountain was controlled by Meo partisans of the CIA-organized Clandestine Army until March 1968.

In August 1964, following the Gulf of Tonkin incident, according to reliable American sources then working in the Air Force, U.S. aircraft completed surveys of north-east Laos with the principal objective of finding areas close to the North Vietnamese border that could be used to support the American bombing of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and North Vietnam itself.

Started in 1964

Although foreign military intervention in Laos was prohibited by the 1962 Geneva accords, the sources say construction of the Phou Pha Thi installation was begun in late 1964.

The mountain had obvious strategic advantages. It faced a narrow valley where a 700-foot-long dirt landing strip was built.

Its proximity to North Vietnam and its commanding heights made it ideal for radar guidance systems and as a base for "Jolly Green Giant" rescue helicopters, which were used to save American pilots downed by anti-aircraft fire in North Vietnam.

The base, as described by a variety of Americans and Laotians here who visited it,

was like something out of an Ian Fleming novel.

Exotic telecommunications equipment, including radar nets, dotted Phou Pha Thi and several nearby hills. American Air Force and CIA personnel used the valley landing strip as the base for American-led teams of Meo mercenaries entering North Vietnam on special harassment missions.

These teams were also used to attack the Pathet Lao administrative headquarters and Samneua town, 23 miles to the east.

Remote-Control Bombing

The radar was used to pinpoint exact distances between Phou Pha Thi and targets in North Vietnam, and guide the planes there. This sophisticated installation was considered essential for bombing in bad weather and at night.

The main American headquarters was in a deep limestone cavern near the mountain's summit.

Inside the cavern were control consoles for the electronic equipment and a situation room. Living quarters were in a nearby concrete bunker.

The entire complex was ringed with Clandestine Army positions, directed by American personnel in cooperation with Meo officers paid by the CIA.

Into the Pha Thi runway, civilian American pilots, employed by Air America, the charter airline that acts as the U.S. logistics arm in Laos, would fly supplies, electronic equipment and arms.

Unmarked, armed helicopters transported Laotian soldiers and U.S. personnel on missions. Short take-off and landing aircraft based at Pha Thi were used to link scores of other "friendly" positions deep in the Communist hinterland.

Just Visiting

Some of the Americans there would fly into North Vietnam just so they could say they'd been there, one witness said. There was a Philippine cook who made steaks and ham sandwiches, he added.

This American use of Laos to support the bombing of North Vietnam quickly became intolerable to Hanoi. Several attacks at Pha Thi failed in 1965 and 1967.

"The place was impregnable," said one American. "To get up three sides you would have needed to be an Alpine expert. On the fourth

was a lot of American hardware and Vang Pao's Meos."

On Jan. 12, 1968, four Soviet-manufactured single-engine biplanes of the North Vietnamese air force attempted to destroy the base. The planes were AN-2s, vintage Soviet aircraft that can carry some 10 passengers at a speed of less than 200 miles an hour. The aircraft are used by Aeroflot for crop dusting, rural transport and passenger service in remote areas of Siberia.

An American civilian, who was at Pha Thi at the time of the only confirmed North Vietnamese air attack in the history of the Laotian war, related:

"Just Wacky"

"It was just wacky. We saw these four incredibly slow-moving old planes coming out of North Vietnam. It was like something out of the First World War. The Viets were trying to shoot machine guns out of windows. The AN-2 has no bomb bay and they were going to push explosives out of the open door. Everybody saw them coming, so the Air American helicopters took off at once and, being much faster, ran rings around the Viet planes. The Air America guys fired M-16s at the planes right on the border. One of the planes crashed inside Laos.

"Another went down about two kilometers inside North Vietnam. The other two got away. It was like a joke."

The wreckage of one plane eventually carried to Vientiane where it was ex-

Continued

16 MAR 1970

STATINTL

CLANDESTINE FAKERY

Radios Keep Laos Guessing

By DAVID BRAATEN
Star Staff Writer

Despite official denials in Washington, Vientiane, Hanoi, Moscow and Peking, it is clear that things are getting pretty dirty in Laos.

No longer a simple case of good guys versus bad guys, the war — at least the war of the airwaves — is rapidly assuming the character of a riddle wrapped in an enigma inside a mystery stuffed into a fortune cookie.

First, apparently, there was a clandestine radio operated by the Patriotic Neutralist Forces in Laos (bad guys).

Then, apparently, the "U.S. imperialists and their Vientiane reactionary lackeys" (good guys) set up their own clandestine radio and began broadcasting FAKE PNF clan-



destine programs, with subtle changes in wording designed to make listeners think the bad guys were swinging over toward the good guys' viewpoint.

This, in turn, led the REAL bad guys to broadcast an indignant announcement exposing the whole rotten scheme, and demanding that the "U.S. imperialists and the Vientiane reactionary puppet clique" cut it out.

"I hope," said the genuine clandestine announcer, as monitored by U.S. eavesdroppers, "that all PNF radio listeners will maintain their vigilance and correctly determine the true PNF radio broadcasts."

The trouble is, the man didn't tell listeners determined to be loyal how they can tell the real clandestine broadcasts from the phony ones.

And there is always the haunting possibility that the whole sequence got out of step somewhere along the line.

Maybe the original clandestine radio was a CIA operation, the second clandestine radio was the real voice of the bad guys and the outraged exposure broadcast was a CIA attempt to keep its cover intact.

There is also the possibility, of course, that all three were CIA operations, a Communist plot or just a bored radio operator's idea of a joke. We'll probably never know.

STATINTL

Senate Feels Role for CIA In Need of Some Protection

By WILLIAM THEIS

Chief, Sunday Advertiser
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Is the public debate over the Central Intelligence Agency's military role in Laos jeopardizing its primary information-gathering assignment in this big — still bad — world?

Has the time been reached when Senate and other critics of the Laotian involvement should more carefully define their terms and targets?

Should somebody, perhaps

Analysis

even the President, help clear confusion in the public mind about CIA operations, without compromising its vital tasks?

★

The feeling in the Senate today is that the big intelligence agency, created after World War II to improve this important and largely secret function of government, should not be

carelessly, perhaps inadvertently damaged.

CIA director Richard A. Helms, a career official, has made staunch friends on Capitol Hill by his candor and cooperation. Most lawmakers recognize that some clandestine operations are necessary and that such operations don't remain secret if talked about.

But, remembering the CIA-run Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba, those most concerned are determined to make sure the agency is not misused.

Finally, there appears to be some feeling that formal or informal limits or guidelines should be adopted in the CIA-Laos debate.

Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield, an Asian expert long concerned about U. S. involvement in Laos, is one who thinks "some terms ought to be defined."

★

The Foreign Relations committee man is quick to defend the fundamental role of the CIA, while regretting its apparent military operational assignment in Laos.

"I have great faith in Dick Helms," Mansfield said. "Not to criticize clandestine operations as such, it is too bad they are being undertaken in Laos. They represent a counter-effort against counter-forces which have stayed in Laos regardless of the Geneva Agreement."

Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), also a Senate Foreign Relations Committee member, said he had found Helms and the CIA "completely candid."

He reflected an understanding in the Senate that the civilian agency has been performing essentially a military task on orders of the National Security Council.

Helms briefed members of the Foreign Relations Committee Friday in a closed session on CIA activities in Laos. Chairman J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) told reporters that the use of CIA members in the U. S. foreign aid program in Laos was a long-standing policy established by the National Security Council.

Fulbright, speaking for himself, said the policy was laid down before Helms took office.

Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R-N.Y.) said that the Foreign Relations committee has been "having trouble getting certain information." One thing that is "not acceptable," said the former World War II officer, is "operational without a reason."

Javits also said he felt that the ground rules affecting CIA activities should be disclosed except when the "paramount national interest" is involved.

Mansfield points out that the North Vietnamese have long had forces in the northeastern areas of Laos, along the Ho Chi Minh trail, along which the Communists move troops and material into South Vietnam. And he notes that because the U. S. has been bombing that area, both countries have in effect been ignoring the 1962 Geneva Accord.

What some senators do not say, but what is generally accepted as fact, is that a small group of their colleagues who constitute a CIA "watchdog" subcommittee have been informed all along about the agency's Laotian role.

And the CIA's training activity in the struggle to keep Laos from being overrun by the Communists has been widely reported in news dispatches.

STATINTL

BOSTON, MASS.
HERALD TRAVELER

M - MAR 15 1970
S - 216,305
S - 299,557

Springfield Democrat

Boland Warns Of '2nd Vietnam'

By ELLEN BESWICK

MT Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Rep. Edward P. Boland, D-Springfield, doesn't profess to be a military expert, but he is an expert on what the American people want and need and what their budget will stand.

The Massachusetts congressman was stepping out of his everyday realm of subcommittee activities and constituent

concerns with his declaration on Laos. That in itself is an indication of how seriously the busy member of the hard-pressed Appropriations Committee regards the Southeast Asian situation.

"I have been concerned for a long time about the Vietnam situation, and there was a growing possibility that Laos would go the same way.

"We're not going to be led down the primrose path again."

Boland was discussing his part in recent moves by a number of congressmen and senators to halt what they saw as the nation's increasing involvement in Laos.

THE VETERAN Massachusetts congressman said he had been discussing the situation with Sen. Stuart Symington, D-Mo., who had attended closed hearings on CIA activities in Southeast Asia and had been alarmed at some of the reports.

"We saw a danger in the situation and wanted to create the kind of atmosphere that would make the Administration terribly cautious, which is what has happened."

Boland said he also wanted to alert the Congress and the people as to just what was going on.

"A review of recent history — the past six years in Vietnam — illustrates just how a thing like this can grow.

"I don't think the Congress will again allow policy of this kind to be made by the executive branch. I think the Congress should and will have much more of a say in what our policy is."

He carried his warning to the House floor Feb. 26, introducing a House resolution demanding the Administration reveal the precise extent of the nation's military operations in Laos and limiting any increase without the clear consent of the Congress.

BOLAND WARNED of increasing American military actions, countered by a buildup in North Vietnamese troops in the Laotian nation.

Since that time other critics have joined in, there have been two White House statements on the situation and resolutions have been introduced calling for a similar sense of the Senate resolution.

"I'm glad that both houses of the Congress can now consider legislative resolutions expressing concern about Laos, Boland said.



BOLAND

"I don't think our interests are that vital there and I think we have been in Vietnam much too long."

Having made his declaration and sparked development of the issue, one of the most respected members of the Massachusetts delegation left the field to the orators and returned to the world of finance.

The Appropriations Committee and its subcommittees are commonly referred to as "holding the purse-strings of the nation." The President may request and veto, the Congress may authorize and approve, but it is among a relatively small group of men that such grandiose programs as environmental control, mass transit and trips to the moon meet their ultimate fate. It's there that the budgets of all the departments and agencies of federal government are considered item by item and whittled down to dollars and cents.

Boland is an extremely active member of this group. As chairman of the Transportation Subcommittee and a ranking member of the subcommittees on Public Works and Housing and Urban Development and Independent Agencies, he has a major say in where and how approximately one fourth of the Federal money is spent. Boland shares chairmanship duties on the Public Works Subcommittee due to the illness of its chairman.

HIS COMMITTEE work keeps him busy. The time-honored custom among Capitol Hill reporters of catching up with a congressman going between his office, the House floor and his committees, matching stride, and discussing his latest news and views doesn't often work with the former varsity sports star. The congressman, in his late fifties, sets a brisk pace and is often seen on the run with a preoccupied or harassed countenance.

He explains, "The Congress was concerned with the delay in Appropriations last year. It wasn't really the fault of the Appropriations Committee" which was made to wait for the presidential programs of a new administration and a slow-moving Senate.

"But the committee chairman has put some strict deadlines on this year. He wants all the appropriations measures reported out by May. I plan to have transportation hearings completed by April and the report in by the middle of May."

In the field of transportation, the congressman said he and a lot of other people are becoming increasingly concerned with cuts in railroad passenger service. Boland introduced a bill last year to give the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) authority to establish minimum standards of service in both the number and quality of trains.

"We have to take a stand and tell the railroads what they have to do," the congressman said. "Then we will need a program of direct government subsidies for the long haul service, coupled with close scrutiny of the railroads' financial statements."

"THE RAILROADS just can't make a profit on the long haul service and they are trying to eliminate it. It's conceivable, however, that with government help and by upgrading the service, the losses would not be substantial.

"Railroads are absolutely essential to the economy and critical to the national defense. You can move a lot more people by train than you can by any other means."

The congressman noted the success of the Metroliner between New York and Washington and the hopes for the

Captain's Death in Laos Embarrassing to Administration

BY ALDO BECKMAN and
JAMES YUENGER

(Chicago Tribune Press Service)

Washington, March 14—It was well after midnight when the telephone awakened Gerald L. Warren, deputy White House press secretary, in his suite in Miami's Four Ambassadors hotel.

Warren was acting White House press secretary for the week-end, with his boss, Ronald Ziegler, taking some time off while President Nixon was spending a week-end in the sun at his Key Biscayne retreat.

The nocturnal call was from the Pentagon and the anxious official on the other end thought that Warren should know that the department of defense had just confirmed a query concerning the death of an American army captain in Laos in February, 1969.

Death Is Significant

The death, itself, which came during a commando raid on a barracks where Capt. Joseph Bush had been sleeping, took on added significance since the President, in a statement that had been on front pages throughout America that very day, had emphasized that no American soldier had been killed in ground combat since American involvement in Laos began in 1962.

Warren made several hurried calls back to Washington to further confirm his newly-acquired, and potentially embarrassing information — then went back to bed.

Press Goes Into Action

He was up a few hours later, however, talking with Dr. Henry Kissinger, assistant to the President on national

security affairs, and the chief architect of the President's statement on Laos.

By the time Warren confronted reporters that day, the story about Capt. Bush's death was on page 1 of the Miami paper, and the White House officially confirmed Bush's death. In addition it revealed that 26 civilians, including one dependent, had been killed by hostile action in Laos during the last eight years.

Warren later was to be criticized by his superiors for his efforts to be precise with a group of hostile reporters who felt they had been double-crossed by the President's statement that no American soldier had been killed in ground combat, only to learn later that one army captain was killed by enemy bullets.

A Colossal Mixup

Altho Ziegler and Warren insisted that the President was not disturbed by the apparent contradiction—arguing that Bush's death could not be considered a ground combat fatality since he was surprised by marauders in the middle of the night—a state department official termed the effort to supply the President with current facts on Laos as a "colossal mixup."

When the President decided to make a statement on Laos during the first part of last week, the information on casualties there during the last several years was scattered among several agencies involved with the so-called secret war.

At least two days after the speech, according to state department sources, a master list of casualties including names and circumstances of death — which might have turned up Bush's name in the process of preparation — still had not been compiled by anyone in contact with all the agencies involved.

That included the state department, the defense department, the agency for international development [AID], the central intelligence agency [CIA], Air America and Air Continental, air lines contracted by the state department and allegedly operated by the CIA, and the International Voluntary service, an organization engaged in refugee relief and similar activities in the tiny southeast Asian nation.

Who Erred Is Not Clear

Placed in over-all charge of the state department's contribution was Marshal Green, assistant secretary of state for near east and Pacific affairs,

which includes Viet Nam as well as Laos.

Green delegated most of the work to Jonathan Moore, 37, a deputy assistant secretary, considered an east Asian expert.

Altho the failure to tell the President about Bush's death would have been the responsibility of the state department, since he was officially listed as a military attache to the American embassy in Laos, who, if anyone, was at fault for not providing such information is not clear.

White House officials refuse to say what questions were asked, in preparation for the speech, raising the speculation that the wrong questions might have been asked. And state department officials, obviously aware of the potential embarrassment involved, sent all queries on the matter to the White House.

There apparently has never been an effort to hide the facts surrounding Bush's death, with his hometown paper in Temple, Tex., revealing at the time that he was killed in Laos.

His widow told reporters that she knew where her husband was and that he had never made any efforts to hide his whereabouts.

"It was a pretty confusing week-end," another state department official conceded. "We're still trying to figure out just what happened. The records of what happened to whom [in Laos] were scattered among various agencies and not instantly available."

"Nobody remembered Capt. Bush," he continued. "When he got a silver star [for his actions against the Communists the night he was killed], it was published, citing action in Laos, but it got buried someplace in army orders."

"This was missed."

Quiet Week-End Busy One

Kissinger obtained what he thought was complete information on Laos the middle of last week and Ziegler warned reporters that what had been planned as a quiet week-end in

Florida, would be a busy one to include a posture statement on Laos.

The President made his decision to release the information on Laos [the first such revelations since our involvement in 1962, the White House boasted] after congressional and public outcries mounted following the communist capture of the Plain of Jars.

There was obvious growing fear among many Americans that the nation was slipping into another Viet Nam and the President's promise to keep citizens informed about any United States military commitment in the world was beginning to sound more and more hollow.

A Cooperative Statement

The President and Kissinger worked so closely on the Laos statement that the President's stable of speech writers were not even called in to help compose it . . . with the writing being left to Kissinger, his staff, and the President himself. Ziegler also played a major part in "composing the statement."

As the President returned to Washington last Sunday night, there were increasing reports of a Nixon "credibility gap," an awesome charge given some credit for toppling President Johnson.

The new charges, based on the Bush death and the subsequent revelation about the death of the 26 civilians, caused the President to decide shortly after noon on Monday that he had to take yet one more step to prove his sincerity.

Reveals All Available Data

He ordered the release of the names of six civilians who had been killed in Laos since his administration took over in January, 1969. And he announced that the number of planes lost over Laos and the number of ground fatalities, if any, would be announced as they occurred.

He worked with Kissinger and Ziegler all Monday afternoon on the carefully-worded statement, finally read verbatim from a yellow legal-

15 MAR. 1970

The World

S.E. ASIA

Debate on Laos

In his message to Congress, President Nixon stated that because of "grossly inaccurate" rumors about U.S. involvement in Laos, he had concluded that it would be best to give a "precise description of our current activities" there.

But combined with the revelations that followed, the report gave rise in some minds to an old criticism of the Johnson administration: the credibility gap.

"No American stationed in Laos has ever been killed in ground combat operations," the President had said. But soon afterwards, the Los Angeles Times reported in a copyrighted story that Capt. Joseph Bush, an Army adviser to the Royal Army of Laos, was killed by North Vietnamese soldiers in February, 1969.

Bush was killed during a midnight raid by North Vietnamese soldiers on his Laotian compound post near the Plain of Jars, the story said. He killed one enemy soldier with his M-16 rifle before he was cut down.

Defense officials at first confirmed that Bush had been killed but could not verify whether he was in Laos at the time. Later, it was verified.

The White House insisted that the President stood by his statement because, it said, Bush was killed not in combat but as a result of "hostile action." The President reportedly was unaware of Bush's death.

Administration spokesmen then disclosed that 26 other Americans—25 described as civilians and one as the dependent of a civilian—had been killed in Laos. Seven, including Bush, had died since President Nixon took office.

Someone in the Administration had initially given the President an erroneous figure, observers theorized. Obviously unsettled, Mr. Nixon announced that the reporting of casualties and aircraft losses in Laos would be made separately, rather than together with the figures for South Vietnam.

The President's message mollified some critics. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) said that American involvement in Laos, although following the same pattern as it did in Vietnam, probably would not lead to a similar war.

But some critics were not stilled. Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) declared that a close relationship existed in Laos between the Agency for International Development and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Times reporter Jack Foisie reported that CIA agents, posing as members of the AID mission, were "recruiting and training progovernment guerrillas to fight Communists, detect enemy movements deep in their own territory and to act as ground controllers for aircraft."

In his message, the President made no mention of the guerrilla forces under Meo tribal general, Van Pao, which have been working closely with the CIA for years.

STATINTL

MIAMI, FLA.
HERALD

MAR 15 1970
M - 375,469
S - 468,167



POLITICS IN FLORIDA

Those Who Misled Nixon Should Get Ax

By JOHN McDERMOTT
Herald Political Writer

Heads should roll in the Defense, CIA or State Departments — maybe all — for the apparent misleading of President Nixon on Laos.

The President's policy statement, made during his Miami visit last weekend, was specific and pointed. It said: "Hanoi's most recent military buildup in Laos has been particularly escalatory. They poured over 13,000 additional troops into Laos during the past few months, raising their total to 67,000."

Now, it appears that U.S. Embassy observers on the scene were astonished by Nixon's report. If that be true, the parties in Washington who manufactured such distorted intelligence should be fired. There can be no excuse for deliberately providing false information to the commander-in-chief, especially on security matters.

NEW YORK, N.Y.
TIMES

M - 895,505
S - 1,445,507

MAR 15 1970

STATINTL

Backing Landowners

To the Editor:

Filipino peasant life is described in The Times (March 8) as "almost unbelievably appalling" in its poverty and oppression. The same issue tells of a land-reform bill stalled in Saigon's National Assembly by a landlord lobby. And it reports on the kidnapping activities of a Guatemalan guerrilla movement which has its source in the appalling conditions of the peasantry.

In each of these lands our Government, in the name of defending our "national interest," has contributed to the perpetuation of the misery of peasant life. In Guatemala an elected regime which had distributed land to 100,000 peasants in eighteen months was overthrown in a 1954 counter-revolution conceived and directed from Washington. The succeeding Washington-sponsored regime restored the land to the landlords. In the Philippines, an insurgent peasant movement was wiped out with the aid and guidance of U.S. military men and the C.I.A.

In Vietnam, Washington in 1954 deliberately deciding to ignore the Geneva Agreements and the U.N. Charter, disrupted the country's territorial integrity and imposed an oppressive mandarin regime upon the south. The regime moved at once to destroy the rural governing structures developed in the anti-French independence war, to exterminate their leaders and to restore the land to the former landowners.

Any calculation of the massive suffering and destruction we have visited upon Vietnam must include the misery and oppression resulting from this expunging of the Vietminh's agrarian reform in areas brought under our control.

Nixon's "Vietnamization" pol-

icy, clearly designed to retain our client regime in power, would continue to rivet the peasantry to its oppressive condition, as our policies have helped to do in Guatemala and the Philippines. While Nixon, like his predecessors, tries to justify this course by reference to our "commitments" to regimes we have imposed upon foreign peoples, he ignores our vastly greater treaty commitment to the U.N., which was erected in large part to protect the peoples of smaller nations from this type of depredation by the great powers.

But as Lieut. Gen. Gavin said recently of Washington's 1954 attitude toward the Geneva Agreements, this commitment is considered "somehow irrelevant."

To insist that it is relevant, that we adjust our behavior to it by eschewing unilateral interventions, is characterized as "neoisolationism" by the bearers of the Rusk-Nixon-Agnew world view.

MAX GORDON

New York, March 10, 1970

U.S. Policy on Laos

To the Editor:

Once again Senators are incredulously wondering how we have gotten entangled in Laos, and the small rural nation again makes headlines. The history of American intervention in Laos started not yesterday, however, but over two decades ago, with President Nixon preserving the continuum.

Various newspapers and public sources have reported American bombings of Laotian towns since 1964 (B-52's have bombed Laos since 1965), Green Beret and C.I.A. operations, and, most recently in Le Monde and The Times, of the total obliteration of many villages and cities not at all near the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

As an American F-4 Phantom pilot told a Times reporter in Thailand after the bombing halt over North Vietnam and the subsequent threefold increase in the bombing of Laos, "It's business as usual, only now we're aiming at a different address" (Dec. 9, 1968). Details of U.S. actions, however, are a closely guarded secret,

since Washington pledged in 1962 to uphold the neutrality of Laos.

The Nixon Administration is presently engaged in further escalation of the Laotian war—like Vietnam only in the sense that it is a civil war which has suffered bloody American intervention—a policy for which we should soon witness another obscure, albeit more polished defense by the President.

Defense Secretary Laird told Senators on March 4 that the Nixon Administration had no present plan to introduce American combat troops to Laos, although air strikes will increase and military advisers will go into the field (making covert what was in the past clandestine).

Laos may prove to be the testing site for the limits of American expansionism, for Nixon's choices are quite limited. He can either disengage from Laos (and, hence, Vietnam) now, or he can continue to escalate the destruction of Laos.

The tragedy is that Mr. Nixon has the power and time to make the choice; the people of Laos, meanwhile, like the Vietnamese, are paying the price of this insanity: annihilation (from 40,000 feet).

STEPHEN STONEFIELD

Hanover, N. H., March 4, 1970

Udorn Air Base in Thailand U.S. Mainstay in Laos Fight

By HENRY S. BRADSHIER
Asia Correspondent of The Star

UDORN, Thailand — When President Nixon admitted nine days ago the well-known fact that the U.S. Air Force is flying combat support missions for the government of Laos, he did not mention where the bases are.

The biggest of them is on the southern edge of this dusty northeast Thailand town.

The 36 F4D Phantom supersonic fighter-bombers stationed at Udorn fly day and night to attack North Vietnamese forces in Laos.

They also escort Udorn's unarmed RF4C Phantom reconnaissance planes over Laos and North Vietnam. They are authorized to attack anti-air-

craft weapons in North Vietnam if fired on—or perhaps if they only expect to be fired on. Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird refused to clarify this point when he was in Saigon last month.

The Udorn base is also busy with helicopter units, C47 "Spooky" gunships and some other ground-support firepower planes, not all of which are marked with U.S. Air Force insignia, and shuttles of supporting transport planes.

And sharing the 10,000-foot runway is Air America, the airline created by the Central Intelligence Agency to provide logistical support for Lao government forces.

The base is officially known as Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, and the 6,500 U.S. military men here are guests of the Thai government.

The official base commander is Thai Lt. Col. Jaru Sangphanphokai. He commands a Thai Force squadron of propeller-driven T28s stationed here.

U.S. officials are careful to avoid anything which might imply Thailand lacks control of Udorn or the other six air bases used by the United States in this country. They do not want to give offense that might, among other things, become a cause for Thailand's restricting American activities.

But at the moment the Thai

attitude seems to be the opposite.

Rather than being worried about Americans exceeding their authorization here, the Thai government fears that public opinion in the United States—or at least senatorial criticism—might cause a restriction of air operations over Laos from Thai bases.

Thailand wants a maximum U.S. air effort to check the North Vietnamese dry-season offensive in Laos. Laos lies just across the Mekong River from Thailand and this country sees itself threatened.

Anxiety Not Relieved

The current lull in the offensive while the Lao Communists propose peace talks has not relieved the anxiety in Bangkok. One top official there described it as "a diplomatic offensive to go with the military offensive."

That concern over Lao air war criticism in the United States means a continuation of the sensitivity which always has marked U.S. Air Force operations here, but for a reversed reason.

Originally, the United States was secretive about its Thai operations to avoid embarrassing the government in Bangkok. Although 80 percent of the U.S. air strikes against North Vietnam were flown from Thailand, this country did not want to appear too committed to Washington.

In the case of Lao operations, there also has been the same consideration which long kept Washington mum about American activities. That was the theoretical neutrality of Laos under the 1962 Geneva agreement.

History of Base

Those who get Thai government permission to visit the U.S. Air Force at Udorn—not an easy thing to do—are given a history of the base which only begins in 1964.

In May 1964, the State Department confirmed that U.S. reconnaissance flights were being made over Laos at the request of the Lao government, then as now fighting North Vietnamese troops.

A few days later, after a fighter-bomber had been shot down, the State Department

was being flown for the reconnaissance planes and the escorts were allowed to shoot back if fired upon.

For six years that was the official explanation of Phantom fighter operations over Laos from Udorn and other American planes' Lao operations from other Thai bases.

Interdictory Missions

But on March 6 Nixon said that in May 1964, U.S. planes "began flying certain interdictory missions against invaders" of Laos. That means bombing North Vietnamese.

The United States, he said, has continued "to fly combat support missions for Laotian forces." The North Vietnamese offensive has caused an increase in missions, making Udorn busier than it has been since the bombing of North Vietnam ended in 1968.

Nixon's statement has not yet filtered down through channels to provide a more comprehensive explanation of what goes on from Udorn. U.S. officers here are cautiously noncommittal and they let visitors look but not talk to people.

The 1964 date is deceptive.

A plaque on the wall of the U.S. consulate here marks eight years of Air America operations from Udorn—March 1961 to March 1969.

This base was obviously a key point in U.S. support for Lao anti-Communist forces long before Washington was asked in 1964 to help the government legally established in Vientiane by the 1962 agreement.

That long support from here reflects long Thai concern over the danger of Laos falling completely under Communist control.

On April 1, 1961, the Chinese Communist newspaper, People's Daily, complained that "the United States has built an Air Force base capable of handling large aircraft at Udorn in Thailand, only 50 miles away from Vientiane across the Mekong River . . ."

It was to Udorn that U.S. Marines, helicopters and weapons were rushed in 1962 when the North Vietnamese rout of Lao forces at Nam Tha, in northwest Laos, panicked the Lao government. The Marines later left

Guerrillas Trained

The Air America date of March 1961 is about the time the first U.S. Special Forces teams went into Laos to train Lao guerrillas—what have become today the "secret army" of Gen. Vang Pao. These guerrillas could not exist without Air America's aerial support.

Recently Air America advertised in the Bangkok Post.

for Thais to work in Udorn at a long list of jobs, mostly technical ones like aircraft mechanics. Two job listings, however, were "stock control clerks with military supply experience" and "supply storekeepers with military warehouse activities experience."

U.S. military supplies trucked from ports on the Gulf of Siam are flown by Air America to hazardous little air strips in the Lao mountains.

The separately fenced Air America part of the air base has a wide variety of planes, from small liaison craft to four-engined transports. Some are marked "Air America," some have no markings.

Used to Train Pilots

A few unmarked T28s are used by Air America to train Lao Air Force pilots. T28s, slow old planes originally built as trainers, are used by Laos to bomb enemy positions.

The Lao T28 operations have to be coordinated with U.S. Air Force strikes in Laos, which are ordered from Saigon. Udorn is a link in the control system, which ends with U.S. Air Force officers stationed at Lao T28 bases up and down Laos.

Udorn is the headquarters for the 7-13 Air Force, which directs all U.S. Air Force activities in Thailand.

It comes under the 7th Air Force at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Air Base for operational matters and under the 13th Air Force at Clark Field, the Philippines, for logistical support.

The A1 Skyraider prop-driven fighter-bomber that was shot down over northern Laos Tuesday, and announced as part of the post-March 6 policy of reporting American losses in Laos, came from Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base.

continued

15 Mar 1970

STATINTL

Fulbright's Questions Deserve Prompt Answers

Sen. J. William Fulbright, D-Ark., a leading anti-war critic of the Nixon Administration, is right to question some of the alleged improper involvement of the Army and Central Intelligence Agency in Laos and South Vietnam.

There has been no definite confirmation, but word has leaked out that a secret report defines the relationship between the Agency for International Development and the CIA.

Earlier reports confirmed that the U.S. Army had infiltrated South Vietnamese government offices by providing agents with phony press accreditation.

Compromising the integrity of these institutions is appalling and should be discontinued immediately.

The Nixon Administration can hardly disapprove graft and corruption in connection with foreign aid if its own intelligence agencies have no respect for the State Department's foreign assistance arm.

AID coordinates public and private foreign-aid programs with U.S. foreign policy. Tainting AID with CIA participation can only impair its effectiveness.

AID promotes long-range social and economic development, and tries to help countries help themselves. Countries that receive AID assistance are responsible for the major planning of their own development programs.

To use such an organization as an intelligence front is an insult to the recipients of the aid.

Misusing the press is just as reprehensible. The Administration allows intelligence to misrepresent accredited newsmen while the vice president assails newsmen and television commentators for being biased in their coverage of government.

The government should practice what it preaches.

CHICAGO, ILL.
NEWS

E - 461,357

MAR 14 1970

**Peter
Lisagor****Nixon caught
in Laos fluke**

WASHINGTON — If the White House had a gyroscope by which it measured the nation's stability, its wayward behavior in recent days might suggest that President Nixon is no less vulnerable to events than his predecessors were.

The rhubarb over Laos illustrates how a fluke can destabilize conditions in a jiffy. The word "fluke" is used advisedly because it is assumed that some subordinate in the Pentagon or Central Intelligence Agency gave the President a piece of bum information about American deaths on the ground in Laos.

In any case, the administration appeared to lose its poise and fall back in confusion. A fetish was made over the meaningless distinction between "ground combat" and "hostile fire," and, for a time, it looked as if the President, through no apparent fault of his own, was going to find himself caught in a credibility crack.

THE EFFORT to find out how many Americans have been killed in Laos was interpreted by administration flacks as picayune sniping. After all, they have spent months endlessly remarking upon how stable things have been.

In truth, Mr. Nixon has revealed himself to be remarkably adroit in managing affairs to create a strong illusion of stability. He has threaded his way through competing antagonisms and rival demands with skill, a sharp sense of balance and good luck.

The irony of it all is that Laos is the issue being used to pound at the President. So many other issues cry out to be debated that Laos is, by contrast, a two-bit item. It has been magnified into a creeping Armageddon by those still in trauma over the Vietnam War.

MR. NIXON didn't invent the war in Laos or the CIA and their proxy troops, the Meo tribesmen, about which nothing has been officially said. Senate critics have known about that clandestine operation for years, and to strike pious postures now about what the United States is doing is silly and not without hypocrisy.

For the President to pretend he is disclosing the full American involvement without mentioning the CIA-supported Meo army is to dissemble and invite large doubts. It's one thing not to talk about an intelligence operation and blow a useful cover; it's quite another to assert you are making a full breast of an affair that remains officially surreptitious.

Laos is a theater of the Vietnam War, and even Sen. J.W. Fulbright, the constant critic, says he would not halt the bombing of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which runs through Laos, until a settlement is reached in Vietnam.

IF THE deceptions and pretensions about Laos prove anything, it is that the President is at the mercy of events there. If the Communist Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese troops occupying the Plain of Jars decide to wipe out the laughably neutralist government of Prince Souvanna Phouma and sweep toward the Mekong River, what then happens to the Vietnamization program and the plans for withdrawing all American combat troops from South Vietnam?

Top administration officials insist that nothing can thwart or reverse the U.S. disengagement from Vietnam. They must be believed, because the President knows that he flirts with political disaster if he prolongs the removal of American combat soldiers, not to mention logistic and support troops, which will presumably stay in Vietnam for a few years longer.

The President and his spokesmen would likely avoid credibility problems on the whole Southeast Asia embroilment if they conceded that there is no virtue left in the situation, no language by which to obscure the fact that getting out is going to be as messy as going in.

The game ceased being worth the candle once the withdrawal process began, and the tragedy is that American casualties will continue while the administration struggles to make politically palatable what is an acknowledged failure.

*What U.S. bombing feels like to Laotians

By Daniel Southerland
Special correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor

Bam Non Xay, Laos

The old woman said she had been through several wars but that this was the most destructive and terrifying — because of the bombing.

"In the other wars, I didn't have to leave my home," she said.

"When the soldiers came on the ground to fight, I wasn't so afraid," she said. "But when they came in airplanes, it was terrible."

The 70-year-old Lao woman was one of some 14,000 refugees evacuated from the Plain of Jars prior to the Feb. 21 recovery of that area by North Vietnamese forces and the Lao rebels, the Pathet Lao.

Few civilian inhabitants, if any, were left in the Plain of Jars following the evacuation of the refugees.

In 1960, the plateau itself and its surrounding ridges and valleys had supported an estimated 150,000 people. But a decade of war has taken its toll.

The old woman and some 750 other persons from her native village were moved by plane and then by truck last month to this refugee camp with its bamboo-and-straw huts, about 40 miles east of Vientiane.

Air power redirected

This correspondent visited four refugee camps and talked with refugees from six different locations in and around the Plain of Jars.

After questioning a large number of them, it was possible to get a picture of the devastation unleashed by American fighter-bombers in northeastern Laos over the past two years, and it is not a pretty one.

After the United States halted its bombing of North Vietnam on Nov. 1, 1968, it stepped up as much as 10-fold its bombing raids — support which started on a minor scale in mid-1964 — against Pathet Lao-occupied northeastern Laos. The number of bombing sorties by United States Air Force and Navy jets rose to as many as 300 a day.

This bombing campaign, code-named Barrel Roll, is separate from the other, more-publicized campaign. The latter, code-named Steel Tiger, is directed against the Ho Chi Minh Trail in southern Laos.

The refugees said about 9 out of 10 of the bombing targets were villages. Two years in the Plain of Jars area were

carried out by American jets and the rest by propeller-driven Royal Lao Air Force T-28s.

In most areas of the plain, the bombing forced the people to move out of their homes and into trenches, caves, and bunkers where they lived for the most part for two years.

Hidden by day

They threw corrugated iron over the trenches and covered it with dirt, topped with branches for camouflage. Many said they ventured out to farm only at night because of the bombing.

By all accounts, the situation has been somewhat similar for the estimated 192,000 people living in Houa Han, or Sam Neua Province to the northeast of the Plain of Jars, although information is more difficult to come by on that area.

One Western diplomat reported, however, that in some areas of that province "whole communities are living underground."

It has been a similar story also for villagers living in the vicinity of the Ho Chi Minh Trail in southeastern Laos, where refugees and North Vietnamese prisoners and defectors say many villages have been destroyed.

In all of these places, the bombing stepped up greatly after the cessation of the attacks against North Vietnam.

In the Plain of Jars area, the bombing destroyed the main towns of Xien Khouang, Khang Khay, and Pmongsavan. The refugees said the bombs flattened many villages in and around the plain and heavily damaged others. They said no villages they knew of escaped the bombing.

The refugees said they were sometimes forced to leave their villages and bunkers to do portage — carrying rice and ammunition — for the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese. But they added that in many bombing raids there were no Pathet Lao or North Vietnamese troops near their villages.

Raids daily or oftener

As the bombing increased, they said, the troops moved farther away from the populated areas.

In 1969, they said they saw the bombers every day when the weather was clear, sometimes so often they could not count the number of raids. The planes tended to fire at anything that moved, they said.

For the most part, however, the attackers apparently spared their buffaloes and cows, although some refugees felt that even these

when bombs fell near his hole, several times knocking him unconscious. But while he escaped death, there was one thing he could not escape—fear. It stalked him day in and day out.

Civilian terrors described

Some refugees said they moved four or five times, each time farther away from their villages, to escape the bombing. But the bombs always followed them. Even at night the bombers came, and finally, even the rice fields were bombed.

"There wasn't a night when we went to sleep that we thought we'd live to see the morning," said one refugee. "And there wasn't a morning when we got up and thought we'd live to see the night."

"It was terrible living in those holes in the ground," said another. "We never saw the sun. Our hair was falling out."

"My wife and three children were killed."

Soviet chiefs on hot spot

Economy still trails West

By Joseph C. Harsch

Special correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Washington

Nikita S. Khrushchev was wrong; and that is the real reason why this last week has been enlivened by another round of speculation about possible change in the Kremlin.

There is no single special new reason known among Western Kremlin watchers for thinking that the duumvirate of Leonid I. Brezhnev and Alexei N. Kosygin which has run the affairs of the Soviet Union since the downfall of Mr. Khrushchev are themselves about to be toppled.

But no one among the Western watchers will be surprised should they be toppled, because this is the year of 1970 in which Mr. Khrushchev predicted that Russia's economy would surge ahead of the American economy, and it has not happened.

Economic gap widens

He was going to "bury" the West under an avalanche of Russian goods which were supposed by this time to have made every citizen in the Russian empire a richer man than his Western counterpart.

This was the year in which the superiority of communism over capitalism was to have been demonstrated by the results.

And what are the results?

Since Mr. Khrushchev set out to "bury" Western capitalism Russia's economy has failed to close the economic gap. That gap is today wider than ever.

True, there have been compensations to the Russian peoples. They have less pollution today than do Americans. And this is the one thing the Russians can justly boast about. But it is a case of making a virtue out of an otherwise unpalatable fact. Their economic growth rate has been virtually static over most of the last 10 years.

These have not been years of rising momentum. They have been years during which Russia's economy has continued to be hobbled and held back by the type of economic policies which largely have been advan-

tageously discarded by all those smaller Communist countries which have felt free to do so.

While Russia has languished economically Hungary, Romania, Poland, and most spectacularly East Germany all have proved that shedding orthodox Stalinist systems is the best way of releasing an economy and letting it move ahead. The richest Communists in this world today do not live in Russia; they live in East Germany, Hungary, and Romania.

And who is responsible?

Obviously, no one man is responsible. But it is in human nature to blame any disappointing condition on those in power. In this case those in power are Messrs. Brezhnev and Kosygin.

So it is not surprising that there has been speculation in the capitals of Eastern Europe about unrest in the second and third levels of leadership in Moscow and reports of open protest against the existing leadership.

That leadership has ruled Russia for five years. Those five years have seen the failure of earnest efforts to avoid a decisive break with Communist China, and an equal failure to release the Russian economy.

Moscow has lost ground both in foreign affairs and at home. There has been a revival of repression of thought and speech. It has been a period of steady backward drift.

Kremlin reception recalled

The only area of advance has been of Russian influence in the Middle East, and this has been of mixed advantage. It has put a strain on Russian relations with the United States. Not even in the race for the moon has there been any consolation for the Brezhnev-Kosygin team.

It was just about a year ago that a shot was fired during a ceremonial celebration for astronauts at the Kremlin. That was the most overt sign yet of dissatisfaction.

The story behind that shot remains one of the Kremlin's darkest secrets. All the West does know is that whatever lay behind that shot was successfully glossed over and patched up — for the time being. The Brezhnev-Kosygin team is still in at least nominal control.

But during this last year there has been no real improvement in anything in Russia or in Russia's relations with others.

And so it would not be in the least surprising if a change occurred in Kremlin leadership. It could happen any day. It could even have happened already.

There is another interesting new development on the world scene. It is the prospect of a test at long last of what really does happen if American military power is withdrawn from in front of a Communist military force.

Forces face off in Laos

In Laos today there is some American military force. It faces a substantial North Vietnamese military force. That North Vietnam force is poised in positions from which it could push down from the mountain passes and seize most of the upper reaches of the valley of the Mekong River.

Up until a year or so ago it would be the natural reflexive thing for Washington to rush U.S. marines to the threatened point and interpose American military force between the threat and its presumed target.

No such thing is going to happen this time around. The feeling about such military adventures has been made clear enough in the Senate. And besides, President Nixon has no desire to get himself into a situation in Laos which the Democrats would instantly label as "Nixon's war." His concern is still concentrated on

So the solution in Laos is not going to be the use of American military power.

STATINTL

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Rakes Laos Critics As 'Professional Nags'

By David Murray
(Des Moines Tribune-Chicago Sun-Times Service)

CHICAGO, ILL.—Herbert W. Klein, communications director for the Nixon administration, Friday attacked "supercritics and professional nags" who "nit-pick on small issues" in the current controversy over U.S. involvement in Laos.

Klein told a press conference here that President Nixon had mounted an effort "to be candid with the American people" over the casualties suffered in the latest U.S. military adventure in Southeast Asia and had detailed the limitations of involvement "within the limits of national security."

He declined to identify the "supercritics and professional nags" but said he did not consider news media among them. But in answer to question, he said, "You can find a lot of them on Capitol Hill."

He said the objects of his remarks indulged in "semantics" on exactly how many Americans, in and out of uniform, had been killed in Laos and whether or not the casualties were suffered in ground combat operations.

Mr. Nixon said in a 4,000-word statement Mar. 6: "No American stationed in Laos has ever been killed in ground combat operations."

But on Sunday, the White House admitted officially that a U.S. Army officer had been killed last year on the Laotian Plain of Jars.

There were further conflicts over the number of Americans killed, whether as a result of indirect action by hostile forces or not.

Klein was asked whether, as director of communications for the executive branch, he was satisfied with communications among the White House, the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

"We were not satisfied with the fact that the casualty was not revealed prior to the time of the presidential statement," Klein said.

He also was asked, in the

communications breakdown, whether "remedial action" had been taken to prevent a recurrence.

In recent weeks, news media have turned up reports of increased U.S. activity in Laos, but until Mar. 6, the White House maintained a "gray-out" on details of the U.S. position there.

Klein denied that the Mar. 6 presidential statement was in answer to press reports and editorial criticisms.

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STATINTL

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STATINTL

U.S. get out of Laos now!

In its March 6 statement on the Laotian situation, the Nixon administration seeks to conceal U.S. aggression by substituting new lies for old ones. Washington's masquerade about defending the Laotian people is designed to hide monstrous U.S. crimes in Laos—bombings and strafings and the use of poisonous chemicals against the liberated regions, a ground war fought by somewhat reluctant mercenaries commanded by the CIA and the sponsorship of a puppet regime in Vientiane.

The Nixon administration's statement also viciously slanders the Pathet Lao (the Laotian Patriotic Front) and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, accusing the latter of responsibility for the conflict in Laos. Nothing could be further from the truth, for U.S. intervention in Laos goes back to the 1940's, when the U.S. aided the French war against the resistance of the predecessors of the Neo Lao Hak Xat, the formal name of the Pathet Lao. The only aggressor in Laos is the U.S. which continues the counter-revolutionary war begun by the French.

Washington's lies try to justify U.S. escalation of military activity in Laos under the Nixon administration and to deflect public attention from the fiasco of U.S. strategy in Laos following in wake of the great victory of the Pathet Lao liberation forces, defeating the largest and most important operation in the 15 years of direct U.S. military intervention.

Beginning in August 1969, according to a communique of the Lao Patriotic Front, "the U.S. concentrated nearly 50 battalions of the puppet army, mainly special forces and artillery units, utilizing thousands of mercenaries from Thailand and intervening with U.S. aircraft, including B-52 strategic bombers, with the design of occupying the strategic Plain of Jars-Xieng Khoang region, making it a base for extending their zone to northern Laos, to intensify their war of aggression against Laos. . . . In actions of unspeakable cruelty, the American imperialists and their puppets razed more than 200 villages in the Plain of Jars-Xieng Khoang region. Hundreds of civilians, including children, pregnant women and elderly people were killed; thousands of others, not having had the time to flee, were removed by force in U.S. Air Force planes and brought to concentration camps that they call 'refugee camps' in the zone which they control."

Despite these unprecedented operations, in which B-52s were used on the battlefield for the first time in Laos, the Popular Liberation Army fighting together with patriotic neutralist forces emerged victorious, proving once more the reality of popular support for the Pathet Lao which has liberated more than two-thirds of the country.

Since its formation in 1950, the Pathet Lao (then known as United National Front) has led the struggles

against imperialist intervention in Laos. By the time of the 1954 Geneva settlement in Indochina, the Pathet Lao had liberated about half of Laos, but nonetheless agreed to participate in a government of national union representing all political forces in the country. The Pathet Lao leader, Souphanouvong, received the highest vote of any candidate in the 1957 elections, the only free election ever held in Laos. This tangible evidence of popular support led to an intensification of U.S. efforts to crush the Pathet Lao.

U.S. statements pretending that the Pathet Lao is a front for the North Vietnamese is merely the most brazen of the myriad U.S. lies about the Laotian situation—on the same order as the fiction that there is no such thing as the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam—lies that only temporarily deceive the American people, not the Vietnamese or Laotian people.

However, it is only natural the Laotian and Vietnamese peoples should cooperate in the struggle against common enemies, formerly French imperialism and now U.S. imperialism. During the anti-French resistance war, the French used Laotian territory for coordinating attacks against Vietnam. Thus the Laotians had every right to invite Vietnamese volunteers who fought in Laos alongside the Laotian resistance. A combined Laotian-Vietnamese drive in 1953 forced the French to disperse their forces beyond their capabilities. The French attempt to fight major battles in both Laos and Vietnam at the same time helped hasten the French defeat at Dienbienphu and their total collapse in Indochina in 1954. That should be a warning to the U.S., as it escalates the war in Laos, hoping to make up for its defeats in South Vietnam.

Like the French before, the U.S. has used Laos as a base of aggression against the Vietnamese people. The U.S. has used Laotian installations for its air war against North Vietnam and to support operations against the National Liberation Front in the South. Any mutual aid under such circumstances would be completely proper and the Laotians and Vietnamese justifiably regard each other as "comrades in arms" against U.S. aggression.

For its part, the DRV in a Feb. 26 Foreign Ministry statement denouncing the B-52 bombings in the liberated zones of Laos, has stated: "The government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam supports without reservation the legitimate right of defense of the Laotian patriotic forces, that of responding to the American aggressors and their puppets, in order to defend the liberated zone to defend the fundamental national rights of the Laotian people. The Nixon administration and its retainers in Laos must take full responsibility for the extremely grave consequences of their acts of war."

Clearly the Vietnamese do not intend to stand by and

give U.S. imperialism a free hand in Laos.

The responsibilities of our movement are clear. All the demands we make for peace in Vietnam have a parallel for Laos: the U.S. must end its aggression in Laos; all U.S. forces must immediately and unconditionally get out of Laos. The Pathet Lao and other patriotic Laotian forces deserve the support of all who would end U.S. aggression in Asia.

Benign neglect

Nixon's intellectual-in-residence Daniel Moynihan is known for views and statements which are offensive to black people and all opponents of human oppression. His reputation was left intact by the recent recommendation he made to his boss proposing that the government adopt a posture of "benign neglect" with respect to the struggle and aspirations of black people.

Moynihan may have a point. For example, the Black Panther party would probably prefer a ration of benign neglect to the systematic malevolent attention the Nixon administration has given them. As they say on the TV commercial, it couldn't hurt.

And any number of black community groups and programs, co-opted, misdirected or merely stymied in red tape by local, state and federal governments might appreciate some benign neglect, too. It might even make more possible a measure of community control, stimulate the struggle to get the kind of schools, hospitals and other services black communities want and need. It might give these communities a crack at the better life all this government attention has so far successfully kept from them.

'Benign' Experience

And the U.S. government just might be good at benign neglect. It has enough experience. See how benignly they neglect to force the automobile and oil corporations, for example, to stop their murderous attack on our environment, on the country's health and welfare or how benignly they permit price-rigging, consumer deception, tax-dodging, super-exploitation of ghetto population—the list is endless.

One problem. Psychologists tell us that "transfer of training" isn't always automatic. Maybe the government, which is so good at benignly neglecting profit-making corporations, won't do as well when it comes to black people and will still keep messing up their lives and communities.

Moynihan's proposal that "greater attention to Indians, Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans would be useful" should be a warning to those communities.

A final thought. Can presidential advisor Moynihan arrange some benign neglect for the Vietnamese and Laotian freedom fighters? They would welcome it.

14 March 1970

Pathet Lao demands U.S. withdrawal

By Richard E. Ward

While the Nixon administration continues its escalation in Laos, the Neo Lao Hak Xat, the Laotian Patriotic Front commonly known as the Pathet Lao, has called for complete U.S. withdrawal from Laos and the formation of a coalition government that would prepare the way for an election of a neutralist government of national union.

The Pathet Lao expressed its views in a new program for peace in Laos, made public March 7 by Phou Phimpachman, a member of the Neo Lao Hak Xat central committee at a news conference in Hanoi. In the program, the Pathet Lao demands that the U.S. "stop escalating the war, completely cease the bombing of Laotian territory, withdraw from Laos all U.S. military advisors and military personnel as well as all U.S. weapons and war materiel, stop using military bases in Thailand and Thailand mercenaries for purposes of aggression against Laos and stop using Laotian territory for intervention and aggression against other countries."

Only the day before the Pathet Lao program was issued, the Nixon administration published its version of the situation in Laos, in a lengthy statement that claimed the U.S. is merely helping the Vientiane government defend itself from troops of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Some history omitted

In its "historical" account of alleged North Vietnamese misdeeds, the White House omitted essential parts of the story, notably the lengthy record of U.S. intervention in Laos: aiding French colonialism between 1945 and 1954, the sabotaging of efforts to form a neutralist government after the Geneva Conference of 1954 and again following the 1962 Geneva accords on Laos, the arming of rightwing Laotian forces and the CIA's use of Laotian and Thai mercenaries against the Pathet Lao liberation forces, and that the "neutralist" Vientiane government has been completely in the service of the U.S. since a rightwing military coup in 1964.

Nixon seeks to conceal this record behind false charges against the DRV which, according to the White House, created a situation in Laos where "any facade of native Pathet Lao independence had been stripped away." However, the reality is that the U.S. directs a war against the Laotian people in the name of its retainers in Vientiane while the Pathet Lao has won the allegiance of the people of the liberated territory, encompassing more than two-thirds of the country. The Pathet Lao has liberated this territory despite a steadily escalating U.S. intervention over the years.

In the past year in particular, the rate of U.S. air attacks has multiplied many times. Prior to the March 6 White House statement, the U.S. completely denied bombings in Laos except against the "Ho Chi Minh trail." Washington has also admitted carrying out so-called "armed reconnaissance" in Laos. Now stung by recent press reports and strong senatorial criticism of U.S. military activities being kept secret from the American people, Nixon has admitted that the U.S. is flying "combat-support missions" in Laos.

But even this admission is only part of the truth. The President says nothing about terror bombings

against the liberated areas that have displaced about a third of the Laotian population of three million. According to statements made in the Senate, the U.S. is carrying out between 400 and 500 air sorties per day in Laos and most of these are not along the "Ho Chi Minh trail." The level of bombing, Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) stated on March 3, "is comparable to or greater than the raids over North Vietnam at their heaviest—raids in clear violation of the Geneva Accords of 1962."

Nixon also asserted that "there are no American ground combat troops in Laos" and that "no American stationed in Laos has ever been killed in ground combat operations." These statements obscure the reality that numerous U.S. pilots have been lost over Laos and that American lives have been lost on the ground as well, in paramilitary operations, which differ from "ground combat operations" in name only. Apparently the U.S. has recently assigned members of the U.S. Army Special Forces fighting in Laos to the CIA in order to enable the White House to claim that no ground troops are there.

It is clear that the March 6 White House statement merely substitutes new obscurantist formulae for the old lies. However, the Congressional Record provides a convenient lie detector in the form of senatorial speeches and insertions in the Record of first hand press reports on U.S. activities in Laos.

Sen. Mike Mansfield placed an article by Arnold Abrams of the Far Eastern Economic Review in the Feb. 27 Record. Abrams reported that "many CIA agents in Laos are former Special Forces soldiers," "CIA personnel" sometimes take part in "combat forays," and "more than 20 agents have been killed in Laos."

"Hundreds and possibly more, fully armed Americans, albeit in civilian clothing, are advising the Laotian Army and Meo tribesmen, but officially their existence is denied," Sen. Abraham Ribicoff (D-Conn.) asserted the same day. The Connecticut Senator also inserted press accounts of the observations of several correspondents who left their guided tour and managed to walk into the secret U.S. base at Long Chien, CIA headquarters in Laos. According to Tammy Arbuckle in the Feb. 25 Washington Star, the three correspondents were apprehended after two hours and "they were interrogated by an American who appeared to be in over-all charge of the area. Even a Lao colonel took orders from him."

Presence of U.S. advisors

On March 2, Sen. Mansfield observed: that the U.S. is spending \$200 to \$300 million annually on its war in Laos, that "the presence of American military advisors and others in Laos cannot be camouflaged any longer" and "that the full-scale U.S. involvement in Vietnam evolved from much smaller beginnings." Mansfield also stated that the U.S. still has "an open-ended military involvement" in Southeast Asia.

USE OF CIA IN LAOS CALLED OLD POLICY

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) Friday said the use of Central Intelligence Agency officials in the foreign aid program in Laos is a long-standing U.S. policy which was established by the National Security Council. Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was

briefed by CIA Director Richard Helms on reports that CIA agents disguised themselves as Agency for International Development officials to carry out secret military operations against Communist forces. Fulbright said the policy was laid down before Helms took office — and was dictated by the National Security Council.

MIAMI, FLA.
HERALD

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MAR 14 1970



Jack Kofoed Says

Controlling the Press A Ploy of Dictatorship

SPIRO AGNEW should be immensely pleased. The Peruvian government piled truckloads of police into newspaper offices in Lima, and expropriated the dailies. President Juan Velasco didn't like what they printed, but from here on out he will. The papers have been turned over to employees, and the employees will do exactly as they are told. Mr. Agnew can't stand criticism of the administration, and neither can President Velasco. The only difference is that the Peruvian chief executive had the power to do something drastic about it, and Agnew can't.

Control of the written and spoken word is important to those in power. Mahajlo Mihailov, a noted Yugoslav writer, was released from prison after serving more than three years. His crime was that he told the truth about living under communism. To prevent that sort of thing Yugoslavia insists on controlling all writers — not only on newspapers, but in every phase of the printed word, as well as commentators on television and radio. Among countries which have censorship are the Communist bloc and dictatorships, of which Haiti is a nearby example.

Not only Spiro but his followers who want newspapermen licensed might pull over these facts.

DR. TIMOTHY Leary, former Harvard professor, a man of education and considerable charisma in the eyes of young people, smiled in apparent amusement when sentenced to 10 years for smuggling marijuana from Mexico. The sentence seemed more severe than the crime called for, since there is still some debate about the weed. I have a feeling, though, that government threw the big one at Leary not just for that offense but for a good many others. It was the method used with Al Capone when he was slapped with an incredible term for the then almost unknown crime of income tax evasion. Leary, as the self-appointed Messiah of drugs, has ruined more lives of hard drug addicts than the biggest dealers and pushers in the land. If the professor got too much for smuggling he wasn't slapped hard enough for the bitter harm he has done American youth.

JUDGE MORRIS Schwalb is a jurist who's helping to keep obscenity an integral part of the modern stage, screen and novel. A panel of judges found the playwright, producer and five actors in the off-Broadway production of "Che" guilty of obscenity. Judge Schwalb dissented. He thought what happened on stage was "not wholly irrelevant to the serious theme of the work." No less than 20 different sex acts were presented on stage by naked actors, and the dia-

logue "consisted of vile profanity and utter filth." Judge Schwalb did not indicate what he believes to be obscenity, and it is possible nothing is too dirty to bring such an indictment from him.

WHY HASN'T someone mentioned that House member Dick Renick had the tattooing of humans outlawed in Florida? What a blow that will be to young sailors! . . . I don't suppose any other state can match Florida in

the financial ineptness of our top politicians. Gov. Claude Kirk and Secretary of State Tom Adams. "Florida Report" says contractors, industrial tycoons, liquor dealers and others have shoveled out \$2 million to pay for Kirk's airplane and other extravagances. Friends are trying to gather \$100,000 to get Mr. Adams out of debt. They are real dollar dribblers. . . . The United States government claims "We seek no wider war in Laos," but don't forget that Lyndon B. Johnson said of Vietnam, "It is an Asian war that should be fought by Asian boys, not American ones." Why should our fears about Laos be allayed by administration coddling? . . . The Slippery touch of the CIA is quite evident. They give orders to the Laotian Army. They have 75 ex-Green Berets as "advisers." They order bombing missions, and spend \$250 million engineers operate this war,

how can we believe a wider one will not develop?

★ ★ ★

AT DORAL for the first time in several years for the Easter Open, I was struck with the possibility of a new vacation pattern. Doral is a beautiful complex of four golf courses, with restaurants, lounges, a night club, everything for a self-contained resort. The closest we had to that in the old days was the Miami-Biltmore. There, too, one never needs to leave the grounds in order to have a complete vacation. John McEntee Bowman was the big wheel then, with Milton Chapman his general manager. We may be coming back to that concept. Traffic being the horrible mess it is, more and more people are seeking places where they can find everything they want in the same place. And if they're looking for variety, perhaps helicopter transportation can be arranged. It's more than a possibility.

Fulbright Reports C.I.A. Confirms Use Of Laos Aid Cover

By RICHARD HALLORAN
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 13 — Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said today that he had confirmation that the Central Intelligence Agency was using the Agency for International Development as a screen for its operations in Laos.

The Senator's office said that Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence, had generally confirmed the accuracy of press dispatches from Laos reporting the C.I.A. activity. Mr. Helms testified before the committee in a closed session this morning.

Congressional sources said that most of the hearing had been devoted to Laos, particularly on the foreign aid mission there. They declined to reveal details of the testimony but said that Mr. Helms had been forthright in answering the Senators' questions.

"The Senators were seeking information," one source said, "and they got it." The sources also said Mr. Helms emphasized that his agency did not make policy but only executed it as best it could.

Senator Fulbright said after the hearing that he placed the responsibility for the intelligence operations under the foreign aid cover on the National Security Council, which is President Nixon's chief advisory group on foreign policy.

Press reports from Laos for some time have referred to C.I.A. activities in general terms. They have focused on the training, supplies, and financing furnished by the agency to the clandestine army of Maj. Gen. Vang Pao, who leads a force of Miao tribesmen.

More recently, dispatches in The Los Angeles Times have pinpointed certain intelligence operations within the foreign aid mission. A unit known as the Rural Development Annex has reportedly been recruiting and training guerrilla soldiers and clandestine agents for operations against the North Vietnamese invaders and the Pathet Lao, the pro-Communist Laotian insurgents.

The Special Requirements Office, also in the foreign aid mission, has reportedly been responsible for supplying the clandestine units. According to the dispatches, both units are staffed largely by former American military men attracted by the high pay of the

STATINTL

New Indochina Parley Urged

Sen. Robert C. Byrd, (D-W. Va.) called yesterday for reconvening the 1954 Geneva conference to deal with the overlapping crises in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia.

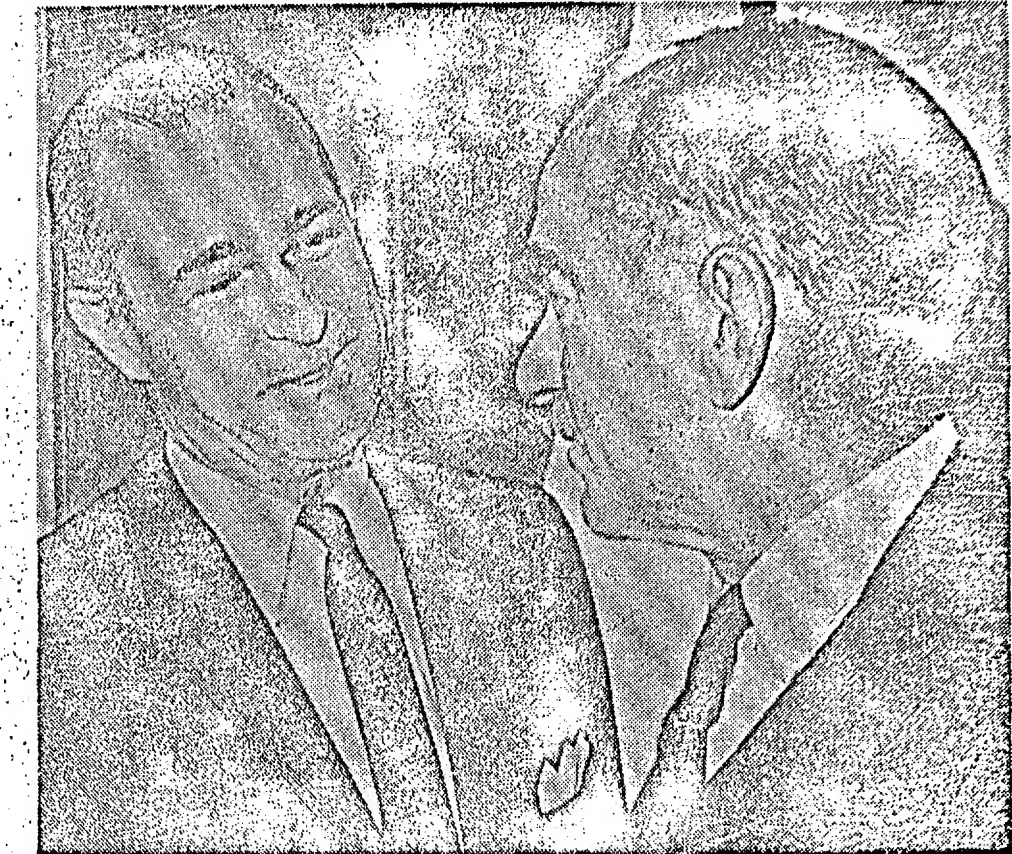
It is "sheer folly," said Byrd, "to think we could settle the current hostilities in Laos without mentioning Vietnam." Similarly, he noted, the spillover of the Vietnamese war into Cambodia shows the inter-relationship of tensions throughout what was formerly French Indochina.

The Nixon administration has made a "commendable political gesture" in trying to reopen discussions on Laos through the 1962 Geneva accord on Laos, said Byrd, but the focus is too narrow.

The earlier, 1954, conference ended the French Indochinese war in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Byrd told the Senate that "We in the Western world have long labored under the mistaken belief that the problems of Southeast Asia can be attacked by Laotian, Vietnamese or Cambodian solutions."

Sen. J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), who is challenging administration policy in Laos, told newsmen he is now convinced that CIA operations there are a result of long-standing U.S. policy established by the National Security Council.

Fulbright spoke to reporters after the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which he heads, heard testimony behind closed doors from Richard Helms, director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Fulbright said he continues to be disturbed by the use of the CIA



United Press International

CIA Director Richard Helms (left) is greeted by Sen. J.W. Fulbright.

in paramilitary operations. But the decision to use the CIA in that covert capacity in Laos, he said, was not made by the CIA itself.

U.S. policies in Laos were challenged yesterday by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees, from the standpoint of their impact on the civilian population.

In a letter to Secretary of

State William P. Rogers, Kennedy said that over the past few months, "Reports indicate the number of refugees in Laos has escalated to at least one-quarter of the country's population."

In a long questionnaire to Rogers, Kennedy asked a detailed series of questions about the costs, concepts and operation of U.S. policy in Laos which affect civilians.

14 MAR 1970

Intervention Critics Praise Nixon Tonkin Gulf Stand

STATINTL

By United Press International

The Nixon administration's decision not to fight repeal of the controversial 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution brought unqualified praise today from critics of U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia.

Sen. J. William Fulbright, D-Ark., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called the nine-page letter taking a neutral stance on repeal "the most enlightened, progressive and conciliatory memorandum I've received from the State Department in a long time."

Fulbright called State Department witnesses to a committee hearing Monday and predicted swift passage of a measure of dissolve the Tonkin agreement and three other resolutions passed by Congress during national emergencies over the last two decades.

The resolutions authorized intervention in Formosa, Cuba, Lebanon and Vietnam.

The sponsor of the repeal measure, Sen. Charles McC. Mathias, R-Md., said the letter was "a very positive development" and predicted remaining differences over wording could be worked out.

Witnesses Scheduled

Undersecretary of State Elliot L. Richardson and departmental legal adviser John R. Stevenson will be the witnesses Monday.

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution has been the source of continuing vexation between the committee and the executive branch. Fulbright claims the Johnson administration lied to Congress to obtain passage of the resolution authorizing the president to take "all necessary steps" to repel Communist aggression in Southeast Asia.

Former President Lyndon B. Johnson, however, always has claimed Fulbright and other dissidents knew precisely what the resolution meant. Johnson used it as his primary justification to commit U.S. troops to battle in Southeast Asia.

More recently, Fulbright has been concerned the Nixon administration might use the resolution as its congressional authority for intervening in Laos. But the letter, signed by Assistant Secretary H. G. Torbert, entirely disposed of any such conception.

Torbert Gives View

Torbert said Nixon was "not depending on any of these resolutions as legal or constitutional authority for its present conduct of foreign relations, or its contingency plans."

Although counselling that repeal of the Tonkin measure "may well create the wrong impression abroad about U.S. policy," Torbert said it was well within Congress' rights and "we neither advocate nor oppose congressional action."

In a Dec. 4 letter, the department flatly opposed repeal on grounds the resolution "has consequences for Southeast Asia which go beyond the war in Vietnam."

Fulbright, also said yesterday the use of the Central Intelligence Agency in the foreign aid program in Laos is a long-

standing U.S. policy established by the National Security Council. Despite a briefing by CIA Director Richard Helms, Fulbright told newsmen he continues to be disturbed by use of the CIA in non-intelligence gathering roles as paramilitary forces.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., said in a letter yesterday to Secretary of State William P. Rogers that the administration has "chosen to ignore the humanitarian dimensions of the Laos war, and the military and political significance of the massive displacement of the civilian population."

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Senator and the Prince

SEN. J. WILLIAM Fulbright of Arkansas and Prince Norodom Sihanouk suddenly begin to sound alike. The Democratic chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee rejects the assurances of President Nixon that the United States will not become hopelessly entangled in Laos.

The Central Intelligence Agency, says Sen. Fulbright, is subtly and irreversibly creating a new Vietnam in Laos. In Paris, meanwhile, Cambodia's chief of state warns Hanoi and the Viet Cong that unless they respect his nation's neutrality, the CIA and his own army will depose him in a coup d'etat.

Time was when Prince Sihanouk found it much less difficult to be neutral on the side of the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong and in opposition to the American presence across the border in South Vietnam. That was before Hanoi's forces and the V.C. so blatantly used Cambodian territory as a haven for hit-and-run assaults into South Vietnam that Prince Sihanouk could no longer ignore it.

This week, Cambodians, unresisted by police, sacked and burned the North Vietnamese and National Liberation Front embassies in Phnom Penh and the traveling prince's position became even more difficult. His retention as chief of state may be in question but one suspects that his allusion to the CIA was a convenient device with which to dignify his warning to Hanoi and the NLF.

The intelligence agency is a convenience in the case of Mr. Fulbright, as well. He is one of a group of senators, most of them Democrats, who were in the vanguard complaining that the American people were not being told about Laos. Now that President Nixon has ended his long-acknowledged reluctance to reveal the extent of U.S. involvement in Laos, Sen. Fulbright and his friends are left with a bit less of an issue.

The senator, however, does not give up easily. There is enough U.S. activity in Laos, both in aerial bombing and reconnaissance and in military advisory groups, with which to irritate the nerves of a war-weary public.

There is no question that the American people must be alert to avoid new embroilments of the type the nation is now seeking to end in Vietnam. Insofar as the pressures in Congress and from the news media forced the President to report the extent of U.S. involvement in Laos, public interest has been served.

One wonders now, however, whether Sen. Fulbright's persistence on the issue is still purely a matter of serving public interest. One cannot forget amid this new stridency on Laos that the senator still deplors his own successful campaign for approval of the Tonkin Gulf resolution from which active U.S. involvement in Vietnam really sprang.

Is Sen. Fulbright really fearful that Laos will become a new Vietnam or is he still doing penance for the original?